THE CONCEPTION OF THE VEDIC PHILOSOPHY

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Translated from Malayalam into English by
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CONTENTS

	Preface	5
	Introduction	7-22
1.	**The Doctrine of Incarnation**	23-34
	Male Incarnations	28
	The Incarnation	31
2.	**Idolatry**	35-47
	The Concept of God	40
	Idol Worship Formed No Part of Hinduism	41
3.	**Monotheism**	49-62
	Polytheism	52
	Not Embodied in Physical Body	55
	Monotheism Contradict the Doctrine Monism	58
4.	**The Doctrine of Re-birth**	63-72
	Non Vedic Philosophy	63
	The Doctrine from the Upanisad	67
	Illogical Conception	71
5.	**Belief in the Other World**	73-83
	In the Vedas	73
	From Bhagawad Gita	79
	In the Epics	80
6.	**The World of Hell**	85-94
	In the Vedas	86
	In the Upanisads	87

In the Bhagawad Gita 88
In the Epics 89

7. Heaven 95-102

In the Vedas 95
In the Upanisads 98
In the Bhagawad Gita 99
In the Epics 100

8. The Conception of the Vedic Philosophy 103-121
Language in which the Vedas were Revealed 104
The Letter of the Vedic Language 107
The Branches of the Vedas 110
The Deviation of the Vedas 111
Loss of the Vedas 113
Cause of Loss 115
Commentaries on the Vedas 116
Narashamsa 117

9. Origin of the Hindu Religion 123-132

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

Preface

The secret of a nation's worth is the faith, philosophy and goals of life that it adopts as a whole. And when that nation loses its faith and philosophy, and its action are not linked to its goals of life then its decline set in and becomes a *fate accompli*. Then it has no binding force that can serve as an impetus to move in a positive direction. Then materialism ushers in and people are driven by the goal of acquiring worldly riches as fast as possible. That nation loses its worth before the humanity at large and it will be left with nothing valuable.

The Muslims have a distinct position in the world with regard to their faith, philosophy and goals of life. The higher goals of life and discrete mission in the world are the underlying forces of their existence. God has bestowed upon the Muslims the role of leading and guiding the human beings towards the truth. This is their assignment from the Almighty God and they should never forget it.

The task of calling people towards the true path in any country and making this call acceptable is to present the message as a necessity of the humanity. This calls for the need to develop an understanding of the faith and philosophy of the people who are addressed to. This leads to the need of arranging study materials on the subject. In the Indian context the Hindus constitute an overwhelming

majority. Although they, in general, are not aware of the contents of the Vedas but they take the Vedas as the base of their faith. The idea of the sanctity and greatness of the Vedas is deep rooted in their hearts. In order to do *dawah* work (propagation of truth) in India it is necessary to understand properly and be aware of the basics of the different faiths and religions found in India in general. However, understanding the teachings of the Vadas is especially required. One should refer to all the available books and literatures on the subject. These things will serve as an advantage in the task of *dawah* work.

It is a matter of great pleasure for us that a book written in Malayalam on Vedic philosophy, *Veda Darsanam*, has now been made available in the English language by P. H. Khani. He has done a great service by translating the book. The study of this book gives a clear understanding about the ideas and philosophies of the Vedas. This book also surmises the application of these teachings in the life of the people.who are always full of praise about the Vedas.

This book highlights the similarities between the teachings of the Hindu religion with those of Islam. Such similar teachings serve the purpose of showing commonalities (*kalama sawa*) which is very effective in introducing The Truth.

We are hopeful that the information and knowledge provided by the book, *The Conception of Vedic Philosophy,* will be very much useful for those who are striving hard to call the humanity in this part of the globe towards the true path. God is with the seekers of the truth.

Muhammad Farooque Khan

Introduction

"Hiran Mayena Pathraena
Sathyasyapihitham mukham
Thathwom Pooshannapavrunu
Sathyadharmaya Drushtayae"

(Ishavasyopanishad,)

[Face of the truth remains covered
Lo, with a veil that is illumined!
Ho, the sustainer of the worlds, my Lord
Pray the veil be uncovered for this devotee,
Who meditates all life on thy truth alone,]

Learning Hinduism has become a subject of universal interest today with the result that translation of comprehensive Sanskrit works in regional languages reach the common man as easy as anything. Our forefathers had missed this advantage. For centuries only the Sanskrit Scholars were privileged, or rather, had the opportunity to analyse and study the Hindu thoughts in their diverse and complex aspects through which they had come.

Alberuni (973-1048) was a Persian scholar who had spent a whole life – time for the study of Indian spiritual vision and the concept of God in the Hindu Religion. Alberuni's adventurous quest for knowledge gave an impetus to the intellectuals of the time and urged them to set about learning more and more about Hinduism. And

ever since Alberuni's time endevaurs had been going on in quest for more knowledge about Hinduism both by being patronized by the rulers of the time and by other means by the seekers themselves. During the time of the Muslim rulers laudable progress was made in this field under their aegis. Translations of the Vedas and their supplements appeared in Persian-Arabic languages. Kashmir ruler Zainul-Abideen and other Mughal emperors initiated new ventures in this direction. "Daru-Tarjima" or the house of translation, founded by Zainul-Abideen was the first research centre of its kind" in the whole of India. After the decline of the Mughal Empire in India scholars like Shah-Abdul-Azeez Dahlavi (1746-1824), Akbar Shah Najeeb Abadi (1857-1938), Sayed Sanaullah Amratsari (1868-1948) Maulana Abulkalam Azad (1988-1958) etc had made studies on the Hindu Religion.

But with the coming of westerners in to the country the studies that were going on in Arabic-Persian and Urdu languages began to be languished or be rather stopped completely and the later studies were carried on in European languages by and large. They re-codified the works on Hinduism which were mainly in the Sanskrit language until then in to their language. These works had grown in to such an unattainable height of literary excellence and wide-spread acceptance that even the highly enlightened scholars on the Hindu scriptures were impressed by their intrinsic worth. But unfortunately the majority of the literary works of the later period on Hinduism were completely overshadowed by the waves of the western thought and subsequently, as a result of that, they fell in to disrepute. The influence of this western thought was conspicuous not in the literary field alone, owing to their overwhelming impact on the scholars two

works of high repute on Hinduism namely Yashkacarya's Nirukthabhashyam (A well explained commentary on the Vedas) and Madhyacarya's Dwaida Darsha (The vision of dualism) both of which would have been given due respect and held in high esteem met with a rebuff and lost luster. Some of these scholars are still in the western grip, so that our simplest endeavour to contrast the Hindu religion with the religiosity of the ancient civilizations becomes too much obfuscated. And along with the emergence of monotheism there have also begun to grow up the doctrine of polytheism, non-dualism and the dialitical theism side by side and are being propagated. Besides that, animate and inanimate objects from rats to pieces of rock have been deitified and worshipped by the believers. When the callous indifference of the scholars of Hinduism is viewed in this matter, it tends even to be doubted whether the Hindu religion itself is of a divine origin at all as has been acclaimed.

But there were scholars who had studied and analysed the superstitions and evil customs that prevailed in the Hindu religion in the light of reliable Hindu scriptures on the Vedas. Raja Mohan Roy of Bengal (1772-1833), the scholars of the Brahma Samaj, Swamy Dayananda Saraswathy (1824-1883), the scholars of the Arya Samaj, Mahadev Govinda Ranade (1842-1901), the scholars of the Prarthana Samaj and many other dignified personalities introduced the Hindu religion as a revealed truth. These people and the organization were the architects of the Hindu revivalism that swept over the whole of India in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Absorbing the spirit of the movement from these reformers who had made advances on an all India basis, myriad of forums for cultural renaissance sprang up all over the country. In Kerala reformers like Sree Narayana

Guru (1854-1928) Brahmananda Swamy Shivayogi (1852-1929) and Vagbhadananda Guru (1887-1983) had formed a trio whose reformative undertakings animated the soil of Kerala.

These reformative movements which took shape imbibing the spirit of the Vedas irritated and disappointed those who were in a conservative mindset among the scholars. They all the more kept on holding fast to their old ways of anti-Veda thinking and grew much more active in their efforts to hold back the new reformative ventures from reaching the community. Today their doctrine is fully immersed in primitive superstitions and modern customs of rituals on a footing with the living incarnations and man-made idols of gold fomenting communalism and sectarian differences. The thoughts and queries of the leaders of the revivalist movement who tried to retrieve the lost glory of the Vedic faith which had been trampled on by the adversaries of the Vedas and the efforts which they put in getting rid of the off-shoots of unbelief that had taken root around the Vedas constitute my incentive for writing this book. No pieces of information from works that give little reference to the Vedas have been relied on, nor the opinions of the semitic scriptures for that matter.

The concept of incarnation, idolatry, monism or the doctrine of re-birth forms no part of the Vedas. They are distinct ideas unconnected with the true Vedic spirit. Mentions of these customs or beliefs which are being propagated now by Hinduism cannot be seen in any of the Vedas. Though there are instances where mentions of different deities have been made, there used to be no paramountcy bestowed upon more than one deity at the same time. In the beginning there had appeared a few

abstract deities who were classified on the basis of their duties. Thus we have Dhadav or the originator, Vidhadav or that which issues the orders, Vishwakarman, the supreme creator of the worlds and Parthasarathy, the sustainer of the whole universe. Then there followed an influx of deities who began to be worshipped as the embodiments of God incarnate in concrete form by and by.

By the close of the Vedic period people had begun to believe in exorcism, black magic, with craft, as well as in the existence of demons, devils, satans and lucifers and had subsequently adopted them as part of their holy scriptures. And as a result of this kind of unwholesome beliefs and superstitions the predominance of monotheism and the concept of the other-world began to dwindled in the minds of the people or rather be superseded by innumerable superficial doctrines. Thus an analysis of the change in attitude which came over the Hindu community through the centuries forms the core of my studies presented in this book.

Most probably the doctrine of incarnation gives birth to novel ideas. It facilitates the ways of getting even the most negligible trivialities of life highly exalted or dignified. Those who excelled in their fields of activity in society such as the administrative, cultural or otherwise and rendered praise worthy services for their fellow men automatically tend to retain their memories even after death. Capitalizing on this phenomenon, the priests and other dignitaries belonging to the higher ranks of society lend and element of divinity to such innovators out of selfish motives and they gradually get installed as gods in the minds of the people. With the passage of time their divine status becomes more and more glorified and

accepted without being questioned. At the outset of this kind of deitification in early days it was mostly done posthumously, but later, little by little, it acquired the status of being carried out during the life time itself of the person who was to be raised thus in idolization as God. During the period of the religious renaissance and subsequently in its later development these god-men acquired eminence as the bulwark of the Brahminic supremacy and fortified themselves by all means to be the opponents of those who criticized the Brahmins. Those who loomed large in histories and legends in days of old now begin to be depicted as gods and founders of cults. There has never been an incarnated deity in the whole history of the Hindu religion who fought for social justice or raised protest against exploitations. And if there had been any, they would have only been those who did favours for the rulers and priests by way of bestowing boons and blessings on them. But for all that, how they managed to attain greatness in the history of religious revivalism was through the favours and influences of the priest hood. The doctrine of incarnation can be discerned only as a new cult that distracted the community from its awareness of the Vedas and diverted it to the new fold of an anti-Veda creed.

It is believed that the last incarnation Kalki has not yet appeared in the world because it can attract the people of any age in to the fold. The birth of an incarnation could be expected at any time in the Hindu religion. People must take it as the expectant "Kalki" and ordain it God. Through its benediction upon them the priests can fulfil their ambitions. And it was because of this need in mind that the idea of incarnation had not been relinquished by the Hindu religion and had the name "Kalki" been placed

at the exit of the series of incarnations in lieu of that. But unfortunately certain Muslim scholars have also reached the erroneous conclusion that it is prophet Muhammed himself who has been hinted at by the name "Kalki". This belief is not consistent with the true spirit of Islam. At this moment I can only admonish the Muslims not to let themselves be led astray in to disregarding the traditions and examples of Prophet Muhammad through which he taught us the lessons of monotheism.

The cult of idolatry grew up here as a continuation of the concept of incarnation with the hidden intention of erasing the traces of ancient heritage and for diverting the message of the Vedas from reaching the people. The strangeness of its rituals and the ways of its offering made to deities are such as would impress the believers. The visual images reflected on our minds during worshipping the idols desecrate the sanctity of our meditation on God. The modern Hinduism as we see it today has grown up here shielded by this anti-Veda cult and to a certain extent this helped to bring about reconciliation among the warring Budha - Jaina sects and the Hindu religion which were prey to genocide and violent clashes among themselves for a long time. When the followers of the Hindu religion came to know of the fact that they might not be able to compete with Budha – Jaina sects they tactfully adopted their customs. The new methods of worship which the Hindus had thus adopted almost turned upside down the very concept of God that prevailed in the Hindu religion. But in spite of that neither the doctrine of incarnation nor the cult of idolatry was so strong as to bring about any lasting change in the monotheistic faith of the people except that they could give rise to certain misgivings in their minds. And it might be because monotheism was a distinct vision which explicitly differed

from both the doctrine of incarnation and the practice of idolatry that the concept of non-duality which resembled monotheism in perspective had to be formulated. Monism or the concept of non-duality which resembled monotheism in perspective had to be formulated. Monism or the concept of non-duality could easily misinterpret in a misleading way the doctrines of monotheism which had been expounded by the Vedas. Anyway, in a sense it was the entry of monism in the field of faith that inspired the priests to make the vision of monotheism all the more overcast with unbelief and to denude it of its divine liveliness. Monism made headway where the doctrine of incarnation or the cult of idolatry had failed to make advance. Even so, the priests could not wipe out all the traces of monotheism completely from the Vedas. And perhaps it will be because of the greatness of the divine presence in the Vedas that there still emanates the gleam of monotheism from it.

The Hindu religion gives as much importance to the belief in the after-life as it gives to the belief in God. But the conception which it holds today about the after-life or of hell or heaven is different from what the Vedas hold about them. It is a doctrine of re-birth based on karma what the Hindu religion upholds as its belief today. From early centuries the thinkers of the Upanishads raised slogans against the belief in the here-after they relinquished their belief in it which was revealed by the Vedas and formulated the doctrine of re-birth in its place on their own. On a close discernment the picture of the hereafter brings to mind the day of the last judgment and the rewards and punishments preceded by trials that might ensue there for our sins and virtues. And it also makes us aware of the divine insight within us which makes us quite

close to God exhorting us to a life of integrity. But in the case of the doctrine of re birth things are far different. No fear of re-birth or of anything else for that matter instills a sense of piety or fear of God in any man nor exhorts him to a morally upright life, since the conception that he will be born again here as an animal after death does not make much difference to his mindset so long as he remains a wrong-doer as a matter of conscience. The doctrine of re-birth has failed to convey the real bliss of heaven or the bitter tortures of hell fire to our minds or to evoke in us the awesome piety that might inspire us to good deeds. What it really does is to detract from our faith and piety whereas the doctrine of the hereafter which displays the life of tortures in hell-fire and of bliss in heaven before our eyes adds to our faith and piety. The gains of the doctrine of re-birth are not so much different from those which the doctrine of incarnation, the cult of idolatry or the concept of non-duality have made. But, any way these doctrines are now engaged in dispelling a well expounded divine legacy of man-his inherent godliness-which has so long prevailed here since the beginning of man on earth. And it seems regrettable that many of the Hindu brothers are even today in a state of apathy or ignorance about the fact that the very idea of God has so long been evicted, ostracized, from the temples of their hearts by some invisible force.

Factors like inaccurate interpretation of the Vedas, inability to retrieve their missing portions and the linguistic transformation including change in alphabet, all mustered to hamper the grasping of the true meaning of the Vedic hymns. Capitalizing on this opportunity many scholars misinterpreted the words of the Vedas the results of which duly found their way in to proper hands to be propagated later untruly as the revelations of the Hindu

religion. But there contained in them no message for the Hindus that would open for them the way to salvation in the here-after.

Instead of getting banished these vague spiritual deviations from around their religion, the situation was made more intricate by adding mysterious legends and stories to it in later periods. The propounders of the Upanisads kept struggling to break loose from the hold of the divine revelation. They presented the Vedic revelation with considerable amount of alteration made to it, but lent paramount importance to scriptures other than the Vedas. This remaking of the Vedas had almost weakened the strength of Hinduism and as a result of that it had to retreat from today's Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Cambodia. The Vedic faith-holders of these countries broke away from the newly formed faction of the Hindu religion. They refused to adopt any new belief or custom which were different from those of the four Vedas expounded by God. When this new faction failed to show up the presence of the divine liveliness in it which was present in the Vedas they sought after new ways of reaching at the proper truth which was not anti-Veda. In India, too, this anti-Veda faction failed in capturing any good number of followers. For instance, take the example of Raja Cheraman Perumal who forsook his own anti-Veda religion and went on a pilgrimage to Makkah after giving up even his kingdom to others of his own volition. And why historic conversions like this keep on repeating here may be due to the fact that such precepts as convert the divine message in to reality would not get entry in to the hearts of the followers of the Vedas. But the upholders of the Vedas who had to surrender before the sublimity of

monotheism gratify themselves by depicting such historic events as the onslaughts of the Muslim rulers.

The history of the Hindu religion witnesses to events that misled even the highly dedicated seekers of truth who had committed themselves to live in the divine light of the Vedas. The high powered master of the Brahma Samaj and father of the great poet Laureate Rabinbranath Tagore, Rishi Devendranath Tagore's life is a shining example of the result which the shadows of the diversion of the soul of Hinduism created. One evening at the age of fourteen he was spending a "night out" looking at the star spangled sky when a note of astonishment struck his naive mind about the symmetrical design of the transcendental universe. "This could never have been the art of an incarnated deity." His subliminal self kept on whispering in him. From his earliest youth he broke away with the traditional custom of worshipping the idols of gods and goddesses and thence on began to be a believer of monotheism and an activist of the Brahma Samaj. He induced his kith and kin as well as friends to follow suit. One Day at home, when preparations were going on for the worshipping of goddess Durga and for the making of their usual offering to her he and his friends were sitting in an adjascent room all gathered in congregation meditating the supreme soul of the universe.

Devendranath strongly believed that Vedic scriptures were sources of divine knowledge revealed by God. The views held by the Brahma Samaj and the teachings of Raja Ram Mohan Roy well corresponded with this belief. But the later leaders of the Samaj, like Akshayakuamr Dutt, Ramthanulahiri, Rajgopal Ghosh etc disbelieved this and raised concerns about their acceptability. In the assembly meeting of the Thathwa- Bodhini which served

as an ancillary forum to the Brahma Samaj and through its own news paper heated debates and contentions began to be brought in to the limelight on the matter. Their contention was that the Brahma Samaj was a newly revealed faith and that no such outdated ancient scriptures as the Vedas were to be looked upon for supporting that. As far as certain customs or social conventions were concerned their argument might hold good, but when the religious elements involved in our assumption about such matters are considered their belief never holds water, and for a truth-seeker like Devendranath who stuck fast to the Vedas for so long it seemed an impossible task to renounce them all of a sudden.

Pressure from outside to change the tradition of lending the prime importance to the Vedas the practice of which had been followed by since the time of Rajaram Mohan Roy got more momentum. This conflict of ideas which grew up among his colleagues made him unhappy and morose. Anyway, at last he was forced to give in to the wishes of his rival colleagues. The thought of his being forced to abandon the religious belief which he had so long believed in just because of his commitment to the movement was a heart-breaking bitter experience to his pious mind.

His biographer Narayana Choudhary writes. "At last he decided to re-think his views on the Vedas yielding to the wishes of his friends. But it was not an easy task for him since his religious beliefs were built on the Vedas which he thought were strong foundations of faith. So before deciding on whether such a re-thinking as might disrupt the very fiber of his religious philosophy was really necessary he had to take on the strenuous task of conducting a deep study of the whole matter." (Rishi,

Devendranath Tagore, Malayalam Translation, B. Hrudayakumari).

Both Akshayakumar and Devendranath greatly differed in their points of view and mindsets. Though seemingly theist and pious on the outside, in his inner most self Akshayakumar belonged to the category of the rationalists. And discerning it advisable to give the prime importance to the Upanishads in order to shield the Brahma Samaj from his denunciations Devendranath took to studying them. Sree Sankara's studies on the Upnishads and his theosophical commentaries made him dissatisfied. Devendranath became more convinced that the real truth underlying the ultimate Hindu vision had deviated from its assigned path when he made a deep study of Sankara's commentaries on the "Sohamasmi" – of Bruhadaranyakopanishad" and the "Tat Tvam Asi" of "Chand ogyopanishad".

Let Narayana Choudhary himself speak about it. "The communication between the worshipper and the worshipped constitutes the foundation of the religion of God. But in a bonding which lends both the worshipper and the worshipped equal status between them the pride of the worshipper grows out of proportion due to over pampering under pomposity, and with that crumbles the very conception of God itself like a fable."

Devendranath says in his biography about this. "I am the power absolute". This is a self – praise and the ones like this cause many kinds of vices and spites. We must avoid saying such words. When man remains entangled in many kinds of foibles amidst bereavement, sins and sorrows, bound to innumerable earthly attachments 'among themselves', how non-sensical is it to think that he is in total freedom. The teaching of Sankara that the

human soul and the Supreme soul are one and the same has almost turned upside down the whole concept of the spiritual legacy of India. And enchanted in his magic-spell not only the ascetics but even the common people are engaged in chanting the misconstrued words "Soham" – that is, "I am God". (Rishi, Devendranath Tagore, Malayalam Translation, B. Hrudayakumari).

(The biographical bits of Devendranath given above from B. Hrudayakumari's Malayalam book, Rishi Devendranath Tagore, are re-translations by the translator of the present book back to English for want of the original English text of the biography.)

Initially the ideals of the Brahma Samaj were based on the philosophy of the Vedas. But being subjected to coercion by others the Vedas had to be substituted by another work "Brahma Dharma" as the authoritative scripture of the Brahma Samaj. Devendranath was an exalted noble soul who had initiated a spiritual movement with the intention of uplifting the Vedas and who dedicated himself for the realization of their revelations. But Hinduism had grown away so far off from communion with the divine that even Devendranath was not able to catch up with its long strides to reach his destination.

This booklet is the result of a humble venture in to the remnants of the religious awareness and the history of a highly civilized community of the distant past. This work is not aimed at winning a battle. Nor for acquiring personal gains. Its aim is to get to know and to let others to know that which is worth knowing. This is not a treatise on the subject and is liable to mistakes and missings in it. Hence the respected readers are requested to point out such short comings if and when they should ever happen

to be noticed. The reason of my having introduced the segregated lines of the Hindu thought such as the "Vaidikom" – Aryam, Arsham, Shaivam" and the "Vaishnavam" etc as a single religious entity is that these component parts themselves have been referred to individually as the Hindu religion these days. I am sure, if fully expounded upon in their minute details perhaps even volumes won't suffice to contain all the matter discussed here. And I would be much complacent if this work which calls for an expanded study could cast a light of enlightenment around.

Within the limited availability of information and other convenience I have tried to conduct the study for this work as reasonably as I could. Many persons offered me their valuable assistance to inspire me in this task which was begun in the year 1989. To mention a few from whom the assistance came were the librarians of certain institutions like the Calinut University, Desha Poshini reading room Calicut, and the "Dahwa" college. I am really very much indebted to them. The next dignitary who is to be honoured here is the general secretary of the all India Vaidic mission Acharya Narendra Bhushan, himself a writer and a scholar at the same time, who even amidst his official and other hectic activities found the time to open his mind and write a sumptuous foreword to my book along with rendering valuable pieces of advice to me on the subject after a careful perusal of the manuscript. Here I would like to express my heart-felt humble sense of obligation and gratitude towards that noble soul. My next reminiscing is about a young Sanskrit scholar and writer Mr. Rajesh who supplied me invaluable rare books. I express much gratitude to him as well. The next turn of mention is of my friends and others as are listed below. Vanidas Elayavoor, Sudheer Paravoor, the editor of

"Prabhodhanam" T. K Ubaid, M.P.K Muhammed, T.H.M Haneef and N. M Hussian, I hold all these colleagues of mine in high esteem at this moment for their co-operation with this Endeavour. Besides all the names mentioned above two more names loom large in my mind to be remembered here with special gratitude for the incessant inspiration and encouragement they extended towards me. The first one is T. Arif Ali and the other Khwaja Shihabudheen. The last but the foremost comes the name of Janab Sheik Muhammed Karakunnu, Director of the "Islamic Publishing House" without whose goodwill and generosity this work would never have seen the light of day. I express my most sincere and deep-felt indebtedness and gratitude to him individually and to his establishment in particular.

Any reasonable criticism of either the contents of the book or of the way they were treated and subjected to analysis is welcome with an open heart. And I submit this book before the enlightened general public with the prayer that may this be brought to the forefront of the coming generation as their forerunner.

Calicut
01-10-1998

Shihabudheen Arambram

1- The Doctrine of Incarnation

Belief in the divine birth or incarnation is one of the constituent principles of modern Hinduism. The doctrine that God begets himself in the flesh when moral degeneration sets in is the core conception underlying this belief. Some of the eminent names, like Lord Sree Krishna, Sree Ram etc, form part of the series of such incarnations. Nevertheless, any distinct sign of a predominance of this doctrine over the Hindu religion has not yet been established from either the Vedic scriptures or from the ancient code of the Hindu moral laws. The usage of such adjective phrases in the Vedas as, the only one unbegotten saviour, (Aja Eaka Path) Yajur Veda (34-53) and, the disembodied, (Akayam) Yajur Veda (40-48) run in sharp contrasts to the doctrinal claims made by the adherents of the theory of incarnation. Let us see how Vagbhadananda Guru, one of the eminent Vedic scholars and a Hindu Religious reformer, introduces the incarnated divine souls.

"Those who showed leaning towards the Vaishnava denomination and subsequently took to disseminating its principles came to be described and believed as the incarnations of Vishnu and those who helped the Shaiva denomination win popularity with the believers gradually grew up to the status of being shiva's own sons. That was how Lord Sree Krishan and sree Rama came to be worshipped as incarnations and Ganapathy and Subramaya as the sons of Shiva." [complete works of Vagbhadananda, Mathrubhumi publishing house,

Kozhikode, [Malayalam]] Rendered in to English by the translator.

The emergence of the idea of divine incarnation could be traced to the period of the Vaishnava devotional movement. Prior to that period nowhere in the whole history of the Hindu religion any mention of such an idea has been noticed. Anyway, at last Sree Budha was also depicted as the incarnation of Vishnu. A scholar, Kshemendra by name, who lived in the eleventh century A.D is believed to be the first seer who described Sree Budha as the incarnation of Vishnu in his book "Dashavathara Charitham". Besides him, Jayadeva, a poet, has also made descriptive mentions of Sree Budha as the incarnation of Vishnu in his Geetha Govndham. And by the beginning of the twelth century this belief had taken root in an unprecedented manner.

A careful study of the history of Budhism confirms the fact that the followers of Budhism were so often subjected to severe persecution by the followers of Shaiva – Vaishnava denominations. The act of having made the Budhist monasteries in to Hindu temples and the bitter struggles that followed to make the followers of Budhism merge in to Hinduism which resulted so often in forced conversions mark blood – stained pages in the history of Hindu revivalism. But it was the same founder of Budhism who happened to be installed later in a high rank of adoration by the oppressors themselves. This is the general characteristic of the formation of incarnations in the Hindu religion.

What is implied by the dictum "God takes on incarnation" is that God embodies in flesh, especially in human form. Here it seems logical to point out that which possesses a body is prone to decay. According to the

Hindu article of faith Shiva and Vishnu are the two dominant incarnations of God, besides Brahma who is also considered to be a divine incarnation. But only a close study about these incarnations can reveal to us the true nature of the doctrine of incarnation. Vagbhadananda writes on these Gods. "In days of old there lived certain men with such names as Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. They were all men of religion and bravery who dared set out determined to re-build the fallen domain of the priest hood of the time and to restore its lost glory which had crumbled before the growing power of Budhism." (Complete works Vagbhadananada).

The above said is the allusion made to the figures whom the followers of the Hindu religion believe to be the incarnations of God. Those who were sincerely engaged in their efforts for the prosperity of the Hindu religion during the period of its decline were deemed the incarnations. And because of the awesome respect due to these leaders of re-awakening for the service they had rendered they automatically began to be worshipped gradually as God in later periods. From this what turns clear is that Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva were all ordinary men with human attributes including their inborn foibles, not incarnations of God.

One of the eminent leaders of the Hindu renaissance and a Vedic scholar at the same time Swami Dayananda Saraawathy has severely criticized the doctrine of divine incarnation. To a query whether God ever takes on the incarnation his answer was quite compatible with reason.

(God embodies in flesh) not, because from words like Ajaeaka Path (34-35), Sa Paryyagachu Cramakayam (40-8) etc in the Yajur Veda one can reach the conclusion that

"Parameshwar" or that Supreme soul of the universe never gets born, nor turns manifest begotten.

The Question:

"Yada yadahi Dharmasya
Glanirbhavathy Bharatha
Abhyudhanamadharmasya
Thadthmanam Srujamyagham" (Bhagavat Gita – 4-7)

But, there is Lord Krishna saying?
When moral righteousness begins to wane
And the evil prevails, I take on the physical body!"

Answer:

Being anti-veda that cannot be taken
On its merits as a document.
(sathyartha Prakasham, Kerala Arya Samaj Mission, Kozhikode)

Through this opinion Dayananda is making it more obvious to the Hindu community that the doctrine of incarnation is anti-Veda and the belief they have imbibed is a false one. Really, it is their ignorance about the Vedas that helped such a belief in divine incarnation develop in them.

Their blind belief in the legendary fables of the traditionalists with which they were indoctrinated and the subservient attitude which they evinced in lending credence to the undocumented ideas helped this false notion grow and permeate among them.

The aim of certain incarnations are the slaying of evil humans like Hamsa or Ravana. Here, Dayananada uses the most bitter language to react to this kind of

superstitions. The eternal power is supposed to be engaged permanently in creation, beingness and destruction without being himself embodied in flesh. Before such an Almighty God human beings such as Hamsa or Ravana aren't worth even a straw and could be slain at any time. Then, those who argue that such an Almighty takes on birth and death just in order to kill a beast or a human being and returns to the previous state after the mission deserve to be called by no other names but fools. Incarnation is a journey from a place of existence to that of non-existence. Conversely, something arrives where it was not there initially from where it was there previously. This idea refutes the common belief in the immanence of God. And moreover, it also casts gloom over our notion about the omnipotence of Sree Parameshwar, The Almighty.

Many scholars point out that on close examination the doctrine of incarnation reveals itself to be a distorted vision that might subvert the belief in the existence of God which the Vedas have so long upheld. The famous Vedic scholar Acharya Narendra Bhushan points out the main drawback of this doctrine.

"As a rule incarnations are prone to worldly events such as, birth and death, waxing and waning, happiness and sorrows and embodying in flesh. This being in contrast to the distinctive attributes contained in the Yajur (40-8) may turn out derogatory to the divine spirit of the Vedas and hence disapproving to the devotees in general. Nasthika: Veda Ninthaka: (Atheism Breeds Desecration of the Vedas), thus goes the tradition of theological ethic. What we bind ourselves to do by our recognizing the doctrine of incarnation is to desecrate the sanctity of the Vedas and thus to create a general notion that God might

also be affected by birth and death. This is a severe violation of the religious ideas we hold dear". (Vigraaharadhana. Vaidika Sahithya Parishat, Chengannur). Rendered in to English by the translator.

All the above statements totally nullify the validity of the doctrine of incarnation. These doctrines the likes of which form no basic parts of the Hindu religion and which stand divided as incompatible with many of its concepts including the idea of God have ever played a prominent part in distorting the Hindu religion. And this was the result of meddlings which had been at work for centuries. The saying from the Gita, "I take on incarnation from age to age to protect the virtuous and to destroy the uncouth who indulge in vices" is just a pointer to such meddlings.

From the distinctive attributes, Aja Eaka Path, Akayam etc it could be cogently assumed that the transcendence of Parameshwar is disembodied without birth or death. Nor would the doctrine of divine incarnation turn out compatible with the norms of theological science much as would it be contrasted with the criterion of logical reasoning. Here it begs the question how is it that the indefinable supreme sustainer of the worlds Parameshwar who is believed to possess no happiness or shades of sorrow happens to be born through human coitus. It is like claiming that a sterile man got married and begot a son.

Male Incarnations

When the original individualities of the male incarnations and their ways of life come under study the baselessness of the doctrine of incarnation grows more vivid to us. The deities Shiva and Vishnu who loom large

among these incarnations were mere human beings like us. They had set out actively in to the open for preserving the Hindu Dharma from decline. Shiva is believed to have taken a girl Parvathy by name in marriage as his second wife from among the hill tribes of the time when his first wife died. Thus we see that Shiva was a human being who had lived his life with wife and children and then died, as a matter of fact. Let us see how Shiva and Vishnu are introduced to us by Vagbhadananda Guru.

"Since Shiva is believed to have gone from house to house for food as a source of livelihood and showed dexterity in the art of snake-charming, besides being father to a girl 'Nanga' by name who belonged to the Kurava tribe, there seems to have no impropriety in tracing the lineage also of Shiva to the Kurava tribe. Anyway, now that the Brahmins even today refuse to eat the food offered to Shiva in the temple on religious reasons, it is to be inferred that he belonged to a lower caste. The claim that it was because of Shiva's heinous act of beheading Brahma that this refusal of food against him surfaced does not hold water, because, if so, how is it that the same Brahmins dare eat the same kind of food offered to Vishnu without compunction when Vishnu himself has a notoriety attached to him for having killed thousands of people by cutting their throats, let alone the disrepute that the killing of his own mother by himself brought on him" (Complete works Vagbhadananda).

He continues; "Vishnu and Shiva ruthlessly used their weapons of destruction such as sickles, clubs and tridents extensively in their battles for propagating their religion. As a result of that their religious faith took root and predominated in India by and by. Vikunda was the name of Vishnu's mother, hence he is known also by the name

Vaikundan. And there seems to be nothing amiss in believing that he descended from the Aryan Race." (Vagbhadananda Complete Works)

The above passage and those which appeared at the beginning of the chapter point to the distinctive individualities of both Shiva and Visnu. Their outstanding features as were noted by a detached observer read as follows.

I. Both Shiva and Vishnu were reformers of the Hindu religion. They were at the forefront of the campaign set up for re-animating the Hindu religion which had crumbled following the propagation of Budhism.

II. Shiva was an ordinary man who married secondly a woman named Parvathy from among the hill tribes after his first wife had died. He had a daughter called Nanga. He murdered Brahma who was also another incarnation like himself. Though the Brahmins acknowledge him as a divine incarnation, they take it forbidden to them to eat the food offered before Shiva in the temple on conventional grounds. He is believed to have descended from a lower caste. As part of his campaign to propagate the Hindu religion he used sickles, clubs and tridents.

III. A woman named Vikunda was the mother of Vishnu. Because of his having killed thousands of people including his mother by cutting their throats he is also known by the name Janardhana. He used sickles, clubs and tridents

in his campaigns for disseminating religion. Unlike Shiva he descended from a higher caste.

Behind the spread and flourishing of the Shiva-Vaishnava sects in India there had been the use of weapons and the exercise of coercion.

Here Vagbhadananda is engaged in his attempts to bring out the true identities of those whom the Hindu believers have so long held in high esteem and worshipped as the incarnation of God. But neither the deity Shiva nor Vishnu who had thus been extolled as the divine embodiments of virtues was at all morally-bound in fact. In spite of that, when the Hindu religion began to flourish as a result of their efforts the believers began to respect and adore them which in course of time grew in to a kind of worship ordaining them as the incarnations of God.

The Incarnation

Those who stood high in history as distinguished men were given the status of being the incarnations by the priests and devotees. The Hindu moralists have ever been only too eager to distinguish and honour those who did substantial services to the world and to depict them later as the embodiments of God in human form before the world. And it was customary among the poets and other servants of the kings to extol them or to pay compliments to them. This helped the kings maintain their pomp and supremacy intact over their subjects and make them more subservient to the royal commands. According as the status and stability of the king and his kingdom rise through such extolling or praises the living condition and

safety of those who take to extolling or praising them thus will also be raised or enhanced.

Sometimes there would ensue even competitions among the praise-mongers for flattering the kings and exalting them on their kingly attributes which resulted in different storied being offered about the same king more often than not. The praise-mongers would show no compunction in praising the kings or the dynasties even to the skies. And very often this would culminate in making the king an equal to God, or rather, the incarnation of God in human form. To illustrate this phenomenon we need not got too far any where, the case of Sree Rama who ruled over Ayodhya in the long past would do. Narendra Bhushan writes on the subject.

"There are visible hints in legends and mythologies that the ancient kings in India might have been the secondary incarnations of Vishnu or dependants on him. The king is the sovereign who reigns supreme in his domain. That is, his supremacy permeates his whole kingdom. Even though the sun is situated miles away, it radiates its light all around. The same holds good as far as it concerns the king also. Wherever the king sojourns, both his administrative laws and royal commands extend far and wide in his domain. These all pervading laws and commands had been the underlying factors which contributed to the belief that the king or the monarch were to be discerned as the secondary incarnation of Vishnu. The constitution of the nation and the rules pertaining to its administration constitute the main weapons of its ruler. Rulers who follow the lead of Vishnu and protect their virtuous subject by destroying the evil doers win popularity and gain acceptance in to the hearts of the people as the nobles. The concept of the four-handed

Vishnu's Chakra, his omnipotent weapon, symbolizes in material from the maintenance of law and order and the extirpation of anarchy" (Devathakalute Vaidika Sankalpam; Nitha Bharathy Books, Chengannur). Rendered in to English by the translator.

From the above statement it is evident that the doctrine of incarnation has nothing to do with the basic principles of the Hindu religion. The doctrine of incarnation was a later creation. Probably this doctrine might have evolved out of the poetic works which were composed in praise of renowned kings lending a tinge of godliness to them. In the Hindu scriptures "Shathapadha Bramana" is mentioned as the original authoritative work which depicts God as taking on the incarnation in human form. It was during the period of some isolated uprisings against the supremacy of the Brahmins that the doctrinal sides of the concept of incarnation began to come to prominence through the above work. To do away with the uprising and to obliterate them completely in the future they introduced their own gods whom they thought might lend a blessing sympathy to the supremacy of the Brahmins. In fact the Hindu were adopting this method from the Jains. The jains were used to worshipping the life-sized idols of their seers known as "Deerthankaras" in Jainism. But the Vaishnavas (Hindus) who had supported the doctrine of incarnation on the other hand placed the idols of Sree Rama and Sree Krishna along with the idols of their wives as indulging themselves in drunken revelries in their temples in place of the naked idols in Jainism. Since then the Hindu religion has grown rapidly keeping pace with Jainism.

The depiction of the marvelous deeds of god-like men and semi-men who evince all the powers of God

embodied in them account for the appeal that the doctrine of incarnation holds out. This phenomenon had been a stage to all the sectarian groups to show themselves off more exalted. That was how those who were engaged in leading the Shaiva-Vaishnava religions and their denominations in the fore-front came to be worshipped as the incarnations later on. As a result of their valiant and adventurous endeavours the Hindu religion might have flourished a lot in their days, but in the later periods the adherents of the movement themselves made their leaders the incarnation and codified their words and deeds in to scriptures imparting a semblance of Godiness to them. When we make a study of how, Shiva, Vishnu and Brahma happened to be got in to the fold of incarnations the factors which were involved in leading the Hindu religion forward begin to unfold, but this real side of history has been under neglect for centuries.

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1 Idolatry

Idol worship is one of the basic factors of polytheism. In this system the believers worship the statues made in stone or wood representing them as the embodiments of God in their minds. Both the Hindu believers and the non-Hindu faith – holders alike lend credence to this system as the basic doctrine of the Hindu religion. But either to hold belief in idol worship or to make it part of one's worship is against the spirit of the Hindu Dharma.

Efforts to make the Budha – Jaina religions merge with Hinduism sparked the commencement of idol worship in the Hindu religion. As an initial step towards realizing this venture extensive campaigns were organized against the Budha – Jaina faith with the intention of strengthening the Hindu faith which had already begun to decline. And following this, temples with the installation of either Shiva or Vishnu and monasteries or convents were built all over the country copying the traditions of the Jains and the Budhists as part of the campaign. In many places the Budhist – Jaina monasteries were taken possession of and converted in to Hindu temples through coercion. The Budha – Jaina sects were subjected to severe tortures by the followers of Shaiva – Vaishnava denominations. And many of them being unable to bear the brunt of tortures were compelled to convert from their religion.

Besides this, the followers of the Hindu religion put some of their religious rituals such as making offering to the deities, worshipping the idols etc in to practice in an attractive way in addition to adopting the blowing of the conch, ringing the bell and the orchestral performance of beating the drum as part and parcel of their religious rites. At the present time it seems worthy of reminiscing the fact that the part these frolics had played in keeping away the proselytes from fleeing their new faith was not so simple a negligible matter as to be cast aside. Not only that, to attract the believers of other faiths even out of the ordinary indecent means were resorted to. Even though the idols of Hinduism could emulate the idols of Jainism with respect to similarity they could not prevent their worshippers slipping away from Hinduism and adopting Jainism as their new faith. In consequence of this, the statues which were presented later before the believers for worshipping by the masters of Hinduism had borne certain distinctive features on them. They were made in such a way as to keep the Hindu followers steadfast in their faith and to attract the non-Hindu holders to Hinduism as believers.

Dayananda Saraswaty, the founder of Arya Samaj, writes on the shapes and forms which the ancient preceptors had given to gods.

"It was deemed incumbent upon the Hindus and the Jains alike by themselves to be hostile and to act accordingly in antagonism towards each other. The statues in Jainism were made in the nude and installed in the sitting posture as detached human beings in meditation whereas the Vaishnava (Hindu) idols were made either in the sitting posture or in the upright posture as self-indulgent human forms in romantic gestures with erotic

women." (Sathyartha Prakasham, Kerala Arya Samaj Mission, Kozhikode). Rendered in to English by the translator.

What the ancient masters of Hinduism had meant to bring about by adopting idolatry as part of their religion was to prevent their followers from converting in to Budha-Jaina religions. What helped the Hindu religion to keep its followers devoted to it during the period of the Budha Jaina renaissance were the naked idols which they had made for worship after the shape of voluptuous women and the figures of their male counter parts with longing carnal desires. The thought of the Hindu masters was that there existed some emotional bond to the naked idols which helped the Budha-Jaina religions attract believers to them. That was why the same kind of worship was instituted in the Hindu religion also. Anyway, competitions like these were only making the practice of idol worship more and more ingrained in the Hindu religion.

The growth of idol worship in the Hindu religion remains related to the history of both the state of being self- originated of the idols and their ceremonial installation for worship. The majority of idols are believed to be self-originated. Believers install the originated idols at the cite of their origination or somewhere about it and build the places of worship around. In this ambience of religious devotion the devotees turn willing to take on any volume of difficulty or expense that they might incur in building the temples or installing the originated idols. As a matter of fact this situation in which the religious sentiment of the people is involved precipitates scenes of dissents or arguments which in turn may result in developing an intensified emulative devotion to idol

worship and an awesome deference to the priesthood among the people. The religious reformist Dayananda Saraswathy writes on the story of how the priests happen to dowse the idols and how they get themselves self-originated. "They would fabricate non-existent legendary stories in the name of such great sages as Vyasa and so forth and after composing them in to books for their liking would take to telling the stories to people ostensibly claiming that they were from holy scriptures. Followed by this they would engage themselves in many an illusory contrivance such as follows for personal gains. They would make produce idols curved in stone to them and purposely abandon them on some hillside or somewhere in the forest, or rather, would bury them underground on the sly. When situations turned favourable they used to tell their disciples that a divine knowledge had come to them as if through a revelation." Last night in my dream I had visions of Mahadeva, Parvathy, Rathakrishna, Seetha, Rama, Lakshmi Narayana and the Bhairava Hanuman and they said to me, "we have been laid stay put in deserted places, retrievs us from such squalid surrounding and install us in holy places or in temples. You might serve us as our priests there supervising the rites and other offerings in prayer made to us. We will confer our benediction on you for getting our wishes realisied in lieu of that. The wealthy and the illiterate believe these follies of priests and enquire them about the whereabouts of the idols. Then the priests tell them they were shown to be on a certain mountain or in a particular forest and, "if you will accompany me I could show you exactly were". Hearing this innocent souls accompany that swindler and becomes filled with astonishment on seeing what they are shown and tell him falling on their knees. 'The goddess has shown unto you overwhelming mercy. You alone

object as existent and then taking him for granted as non-existent in other places is like viewing and emperor as the master of a small hut after driving him off from the domain of his kingdom. Now think about how great an ignominy it would be to the sustainer of the cosmos" (Dayananda Saraswathy, Sathyartha Prakasham).

The practice of worshipping Almighty God as embodied in a single object had never been part of the Hindu religion. The system of idolatry now existing among its followers is such as would distort the concept of God upheld by the Vedas. Nor is that alone, as soon as a believer finishes his worship and moves away from in front of the idol his belief in God also vanishes from him. And now he is free to indulge himself in any evil deeds such as thieving or adultery with impunity in sparsely populated areas. Dayananda Saraswathy and other have pointed out these drawbacks of idolatry time and again.

Idol Worship formed No Part of Hinduism

Initially there was no convention of worshipping the idols in the Hindu religion. Even the Rig Veda which forms the very basis of Hinduism does not make any allusion to the practice of idol worship in it. From this it could be concluded that this practice might have originated only after the Vedic period had begun. In the opinion of certain scholars, idol worship was started for the benefit of the mentally detarded.

Neither the Vedas nor the Upanishads make mentions of such things as the construction of temples, temple worship or idolatry. At least in the Vedas in which the methods of performing sacrifices have been described, there should have been some talk on the practice of idol

worship. Where the shape and size of the bricks and their number for putting up sacrificial sheds are discussed some relative uniformity among geometry, handicraft and arithmetic exist. If idolatry had been in practice, there should also have been laid down the rules of rites according to which the installation of some idols as well had to be carried out. The fact that even the Brahmanic scriptures make no mention about the installation of idols reveals the truth that it was a later adoption. Scholar Narendra Bhushan writes:

"The word idol has a few more shades of meaning like, the physical body, quarrel or feud, part, volume and so on. And the meanings which are given to the word embodiment in dictionaries are, the physical body, figure, object, Shiva, statue, hardness and so forth. Of these entries words of similar meaning like the physical body, figure (image) etc occur under both the headwords as equals in meaning. The Vedic saying that God cannot be embodied in idols drive us to certain random conclusion. The statue is of a concrete form created in the shape of the physical body. If God cannot be embodied in idols, it seems logical to presume that God cannot be deemed as possessing such attributes as image, shape or the physical body, nor can such attributes be ascribed to him. What follows there from this is the conclusion that nothing that constitutes the image, shape or the physical body corresponds to the existence of God. Thus the wisdom we arrive at by this critical study is that God is non-existent in idols and that neither and idol nor and embodiment is a substitute for God". (Acharya Narendra Bhushan, Vigraharadhana, Vaidika Sanithya Parishath, Chengannur). Rendered in to English by the translator.

seem endeared to the goddess to carry her to the pedestral to be installed. We shall build a temple for the goddess to ensconce herself there. You can serve her there making offering and other ceremonial rites and rituals. We might as well get our ambitions fulfilled by the vision and nearness of this embodiment of goddess. Thus through fraudulent acts all the priests became sinful in their endeavours to earn a livelihood and consequently installed the idols as gods and goddesses." (Sathya Prakasham).

It is the history of how the Hindu religion reached the present stage of its appearance with inumerables gods and goddesses, countless idols and deities in temples that Dayananda has so far been dealing with. The self-centered priests and their accessories in temples who had divested the Hindu religion of its ancient values of spiritual heritage were the real culprits who created the system of idols worship in the Hindu religion. It was through copying blindfolded the superstitious customs of the Budha-Jaina religions and by laying bare more exposed the immoral ways and dissipations which the followers of those religions were given to that the transcendental Hindu religion was transformed in to the present state. The practice of idol worship in Budhism had not been an essential part of that religion, but was later evolved gradually out of the devotion that is followers showed to its religious preceptors. In Budhism there used to be a practice of installing domes in monasteries representing its philosophers to the pupils of theology who came for study there. When studying the doctrines of Budha's disciples, Rahulan, Sareeputhran and so on pupils had to recite their doctrines standing concentrated in front of their respective domes. During the time of the Chinese traveler Fa-Hien who was also a Budhist there were many such domes to be seen. He could see many Budhist monks also standing in

front of those domes in meditation. But by the time of another Chinese traveler Hsuan Tsang who came later on the domes had been replaced by their respective statues. Gradually the Hindus who had initially held a repugnant stand towards Budhism also began to adopt the system of idol worship which was confined to the monasteries until then. But the idols they installed in their temples were those of heroes and heroines from their own epics and legends. From this it is evident that the practice of idols worship had never been part of the Vedic vision, but was later forced on the Hindu putting a disguise on it as part of the Vedas. Any way, this alien system of worship had in essence estranged the followers of the Vedas too far from their fundamental religious conviction.

The Concept of God

Visualising God as embodied in idols signifies not even a semblance of piety. To visualise the presence of something in something else other than in itself is illogical. Though the resemblance of an object could be noticed in some other objects they could never be the substitute for that original object. The grains of sand could be visualized as the crystals of sugar. But the visualization is not in conformity with reality. Then, however more nonsensical might it be to visualise the presence of God in man-made idols.

Visualising the omnipresent Almighty in a single object is a breach of devotion. Let us see how emphatic is the Hindu reformist with his protest against confining the immanent ruler of the cosmos like this in an enclosure such as an idol or statue. "Now that the presence of the Almighty remains permeated the whole universe, representing him in our minds as embodied in a single

It has been observed that the Upanishads strongly detest the practice of worshipping God in the proximity of statues or taking them for granted as the embodiments of God.

The Nineteenth and Twentieth portions of the fourth chapter in Shwethashwatharo Panishad reads

"Naina Moordhwam Nathiryyancham
Na Madhyae Parijagrabhath
Na Thasya Prathima Asthy
Yasyanama Mahadrusha" (4:19)

No humans comprehend him from any dimension,
For he is incomprehensible:
He is the power Absolute who is unique in attributes!

Na Samdrushae Thistathy Rupamasya!
Na Chakshushah Pashyathy Kanchanainam
Hruda Hrudistham Manasaya Rena
Mevam Vidoora Mruthasthae Bhavanty (4-20)

(The being of this Supreme soul
Remains concealed from the physical sight!
Nor is it accessible to the eyes of mind!
And the enlightened and pious, if, but in
Purity of mind and body,
Approach this indwelling Absolute
In devotion earnest,
Get him to know and turn out immortal
By virtue of that)

The uniqueness and invisibility of God have well nigh been explicated here by the above sayings of the Upanishad. What is to be inferred from the categorical implication of the Upanishad that God is invisible is that God is imperceptible too. That which defies its own image to be reflected cannot probably be created in concrete form. Since God is invisible, though immanent, it is illogical or contrary to faith to idolize concrete objects symbolizing God. The very aim for which the system of idol worship stands collapses here with this kind of blasphemy.

The documentary evidence cited above contradicts the assertion that the system of idol worship was always there in Hinduism as one of the constituent parts of its basic doctrines. Indian philosopher and Vedandist Dr. S. Radhakrishnan writes:

"The Vedic religion does not seem to be an idolatrous one. There were then no temples for gods. Men had direct communion with gods without any mediation. Gods were looked as friends of their worshippers. "Father Heaven", "Mother Earth", "Brother Agni" – these are no idle phrases. There was a very intimate personal relationship between men and gods. Religion seems to have dominated the whole life. The dependence on God was complete. The people prayed for even the ordinary necessities of life". (Indian philosophy vol. 1, Page 108)

The kind of worship that prevailed in Hinduism prior to the spread of idolatry in it is described here by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan. The facts that could be deduced as pertaining to his words are as follows.

One: There had existed no system of idol worship in the Hindu religion in ancient times. The doctrine that the

idol serves the purpose of being a centre of concentration for visualizing God while in prayer is a new invention that has only recently found its way in to the Hindu religion.

Two: People communed with God through prayer by themselves without temples, mediators or the presence of idols.

Three: Besides being pious people lent importance to the predominance of religion in all walks of life. And for the realization of even the very trivial things in life they appealed to God through prayer and penitence.

But these original ideals which once formed part of the ancient Hindu religion have now gradually lost glitter and faded so much so that they are not even to be seen today either among its followers or in its holy scriptures. And to overcome the onslaught of the newer innovative trends which kept on sweeping over it from time to time Hinduism had to sacrifice even its highly valued fundamental principles. The Hindu scriptures of the middle ages adopted several doctrines from the then popular Budha – Jaina religion. The renowned investigator K. Damodhar writes: "The early Brahmins were in the habit of eating meat and in the opinion of certain scholars they used even the cow's meat as part of their meal. But the Brahmins of the middle ages converted to vegetarianism in many parts of India as a result of the influence of the Budha – Jaina doctrines on them. During the time when the caste system was about to take root, idol worship was not so popular as it is today. It was adopted in the Hindu religion from Budhism. The Hindu temples which were almost few in number during the time of the caste system began to be increased as a result of their competition with the Budhist monasteries. In the case of pomp and ostentations the Hindu festivals were far

more impressive than the Budhist celebrations and religious processions. As early as the beginning of Asoka's reign there began pilgrimages to holy places among the Budhists. Before long the Hindu also took to following suit. In many parts of India like holy places or pilgrim centeres for the Hindu as well began to be raised followed by the construction of huge temples" (Bharatheeya Chintha, Kerala Bhasha Institute, Thiruvananthapuram). Rendered in to English by the translator.

The followers of the Hindu religion instituted many newer innovations in their religion with a view to outwitting the ideals and philosophy of the Budha – Jaina religions. But they did not know they were totally extinguishing the transcendental flame of a divine truth through such innovations. In order to overtake the Jains in their method of making the statues of Theerdhankaras and worshipping what the Hindu scholars did was to confer the divine status of God on goddesses.

This led them to the worship of more than one God at the same time. As soon as polytheism gained acceptance in to the minds of the people the practice of idolatry also grew in to prominence side by side and became an inseparable part of Hinduism. Today, though the number of Jains who pioneered the introduction of the practice of idolatry and polytheism has considerably dwindled, their systems of idol worship and polytheism still obtain without fading in Hinduism. The only difference is that the religious positions of the "Theerdhankaras" have been usurped by the Hindu goddesses today.

With the introduction of the practice of idol worship in the Hindu religion the whole concept of Hinduism became transformed in to a new faith. Hindu believers

3 Monotheism

The fundamental doctrine of Hinduism is based on the concept of monotheism. And it seems logical to assume that the concept of polytheism might have entered Hinduism through the erroneous interpretation of the scriptures by priests. The testimonial allusions that are found still remaining in the Vedas pointing to the reliability of monotheism do confirm our assertions.

I. Indram Mithram Varunamagni Mahoo
Radho Divyasasuparno Guruthman
Aekom Sadvipra Bahudhavadanthya
Gniyamam Matharishwana Mahoo (Rigveda 2-3-33)

(This sun-God is known by more than one name such as Indira, Mithra, and the Fire-God, besides, being called by the name "The Gracefully moving Garuda" who was born of the heavens. Unique is that which is the real. The learned and the enlightened call it by many names, like, the fire, Yama or the firmament)

II. Hiranya Gareaba Samavareatthathagrae
Bhuthasyajatha Pathireka Aseeth
Sadadhara Prudhivim Dyamu Themam
Kasmai Devaya Havishavidhema
(Rigveda 10-121-1)

(The creator and sustainer of all the bodies that shine,
Like that of the sun shedding light and rays!
And as the protector of all the worlds
That exist

He remains in bright light immanent
Ever shone extolled!
And always was he, this Power Absolute,
Unparalleled, before the world was there!
Through our hearty prayers and devotion
We adore that Supreme soul of the universe
Which sustains this earth and the heavens!)

Vishwa Thacha Kshurutha Vishwatho Mukho
Vishwatho
Bahurutha Vishwatha Spath
Sambahu Bhyam Dhamathisam Pathathrair
Dyavya Bhumi Janayandeva Aeka
(Yajur Veda 17-19)

Whosever eyesight remains permeated everywhere!
And whosever face shows up in all places!
Whosever hands engage in ordering things about
everywhere!
Himself is that who makes all others do things
With their hands! Walk on their feet
Nay! Leads them to their deeds!
Such is this Absolute deity!
Who created the firmament and the earth!

The above words from the Vedas point to a monotheistic vision present in them. The first part of the sayings makes it clear that the names, Indra, Mithra, Fire, Garuda, Yama and the air or the firmament denote to a single Almighty God who is the Supreme soul of the universe. And in it there is not even a faint hint making us think that it might be because of God's obscure nature to the human senses that God is known by different names. But what has been hinted at more explicitly on the other

who had been accustomed to worshipping the Almighty alone for long, without the presence of either the idols or any go – between, now suddenly began to be absorbed by the new trend in faith. Their prayers which were initially filled with piety and devotion slowly slid towards worshipping the statues of gods which were designed in lewd shapes. Thus the new method of worship almost altered the overall appearance of the Hindu religion. The practice of idol worship acted the part of a mediator among the believers inspiring them to a life of non Vedic doctrines and urging them to firm stand in defiance of the vision of the Vedas. It tacitly witnessed an age – old religious enlightenment of a bygone era being ruthlessly extinguished and the antiquated spiritual liveliness of a peaceful people being thoroughly spoilt. And even today, the practice of idol worship is continuing on its triumphant march as the bulwark of the Hindu dominion disintegrating the communal harmony and the national integrity in its gigantic stride.

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hand is the fact that it was through the learned that God happened to be known in such mysterious names.

The second part after dwelling on the greatness of God takes to glorifying the exalted attributes of that Absolute being. In the third it has been emphatically asserted that the creator and protector of all the worlds including earth and the firmament is the God absolute.

Studies on the concept of God as envisaged through the Vedas point out that it purports to monotheism. Scholar Narayana Bhattathiri writes:

I. "Eakon Sadwipra bahudhava Danthi."

The scholars describe the same thing in different dialects.

II. "Eakon Santham Bahudha Kalpayanthi."

The learned imagine the same thing in different ways.

III. "Yoh Deva Nam Namadha Eaka Eava."

The different names of Devas denote the same being.

"The above hymns show there is no diversity of divinity in the Vedic concept of God. And there could have more quotation from the Vedas, Brahmanam and Yaskan yet to show that there exists no diversity of divinity". (Vedardha Vicharam, Mathrubhuumi Publishing Company, Kozhikode)

Bhattathiri not only says there are hints of monotheism throughout the Vedas but he also writes about it in another place. "As regards the case of religious faith there are two wings of thought in the Vedas. One wing holds the doctrine of non-duality and the other the

doctrine of trinity. The first doctrine which takes its origin from the fourth Veda was unaffected by the influence of alien doctrines and has long since been extinct in India today. Some thinkers assert that the religion of Islam whose followers are generally addressed as the "adherents of the fourth Veda" is a stereotype of the fourth Veda mentioned in the Hindu theology". (Vedardha Vicharam, Mathrubhumi Publishing Company, Kozhikode). Rendered in to English by the translator.

The movement that Narayana Bhattathiri describes here as resembling the non – duality concept of the Veda is the Islamic tradition of following the concept of monotheism which forms the core of their faith. His conclusion is that the fourth Veda which developed here as a free movement without the influence of alien thoughts corroborates the concept of non – duality pertaining to the Hindu Vedas. From this it becomes evident that the doctrines of duality and non – duality have not been viewed as a single entity by him in forming his opinions, because Islam has never stood for the cause of duality. But in India that doctrine has not yet died out and is still continuing unhampered. Anyway, it is also to be born in mind here that even today there exist holy hymns in the Vedas which bear resemblance to the monotheistic belief of Islam and that by virtue of that alone the credibility of the doctrine of duality is totally negated.

Polytheism

Today polytheism has gained popularity as the established fundamental doctrine of the Hindu religion. It was because of an error occurred in grasping the proper meaning of the term "Dev" which show different connotation apart from its primary meaning that the

exodus from monotheism to polytheism among the Hindu who had been believers in one God for long was caused. The noun "Dev" derives from the Sanskrit word "Div". This noun "Dev" which has been used extensively as one of the synonyms of God has also been used in many other meanings through out the Vedas. Acharya Narendra Bhushan opines that according to the rules of Sanskrit grammar the noun "Dev" could be used in order to obtain one or more or the whole lot of all the meanings ascribed to it. The additional meanings which derive from "Div" and "Dev" are activity, publishing, exhilaration, emulation, delight of meditation, brightness and direction or course.

The reason of monotheism having disappeared from the Hindu religion could be attributed to the dependence of the scholars of the Vedas on the single meaning pertaining to God alone among the many other shades of meaning with which the word "Dev" has been used in the Vedas. Owing to the indifferent attitude of the Hindu scholars towards the pupils of the Vedas in convincing them of the proper meaning of a certain word which evinced a few more different nuances of meaning according to the context in which it occurred the concept of God that had obtained in the Vedas withered and died out.

As far as a language is concerned words may probably bear more than one meaning some – times. The same holds good with Sanskrit as well. In Sanskrit also there are words which show different connotations. Generally it is not uncommon that the meanings of words may change or undergo a fall in their linguistic popularity by the passage of time, but the fundamental set of words which forms the essential part of the language remains intact without

change or fall in popularity as a general rule. And in case any such change or fall in popularity did happen, they would duly be noted and grasped. But unfortunately certain words of the Vedas got to be kept confined to a single meaning in spite of themselves for want of timely intervention from scholars. Of these, the most important one thus kept was the word "DEVA". And today a situation has precipitated itself in which the Sanskrit words "Devan" or "Daivam" cannot even be visualized as having any other meanings other than the one pertaining to God.

The fundamental mission of man's religious faith and his belief in God is to make himself totally submissive to the creator. Only before the Almighty God who is unique and absolute in attributes can he fully show his uncompromising self-dedication. And it is perhaps in this alone that he can be so selective as not to make himself dedicated before more than one God at the same time. The Vedic scholar and philosopher Dr. Radhakrishnan writes on the concept of God that proclaims the greatness of the creator and the equality of creation.

"The Supreme can only be one. We cannot have two supreme and unlimited beings. Every where the question was asked whether a god was himself the creation of another. A created god is no god at all. (Indian philosophy, Vol. 1, Page 90)

Neither the Vedic scholars nor any other thinkers for that matter have ever given crededence to the claim that the Vedas disseminate ideas pertaining to polytheism. Dayananda Saraswathy has also made it explicitly clear that in none of the four Vedas there exists even a single word which denotes the presence of many gods anywhere. He says that the concept of God in the Vedas represents a

III. Avajanaanthi mam mudda
Manusheem thanumashritham
Param bhavamajanantho
Mamabhuthamaheshwaram
Mokhakarmano
Mokhagnjana vichethasa
Rakshaseemasureem chaiva
Prakruthim mohineem shritha (Bhagavat Gita 9-11,12)

(Fools mock me, who have assumed a human body;
My supreme nature not knowing-the great lord of beings.
Of vain hopes, of vein deeds, of vein knowledge, withless;
And also of rakshas' and asuras' deluded nature partaking..)

The attributes of God dictated by the first Vedic utterance are bodiless, not bound up with flesh and blood, bearing no stigma of ill-fame or sin, mild, omniscient and self-begotten etc. It is important to note that these qualities which are described here as pertaining to God negate any physical shape or body that may be ascribed to God as possessed by him. Gods that have been introduced in the shape of idols by the followers of the present day Hinduism cannot claim to posses these qualities. The presence of the idols and statues of God and the type of worship that evolves thereabouts among the devotees the devotees can never be in conformity with the fundamental concept of God underlying the basis of Hinduism.

In the second which is from the Gita it is contented that the believers of low intelligence who do not understand what is God tend to envision God in any form

like of an animal or a fish. This saying of the Gita nullifies the new doctrine of ten incarnations as such which has formed part of the concept of God in the Hindu religion today.

The language used in the third saying which is also from the Gita for stating that God is bodiless is a little emphatic with gravity in tune. It asserts in a strong language that those who argue that God is concrete in existence belong to the category of the infidels who negate God and that such blasphemers could be addressed by no other names, but the indiscreet or the demoniac. These fundamental documents point to the basic difference between that which is to be believed and that which is not to be believed as regards the concept of God which forms the basis of the present day Hindu religion. Any way, it seems rather improper or unbecoming for the votaries of messages of the Vedas to symbolize God with the idols, statues or other images for instilling in to themselves the belief that the existence of God is in concrete form or for spreading that false belief among others.

Monotheism Contradicts the Doctrine of Monism

We see the presence of monotheism running as an undercurrent through out the Vedas. But the votaries of monism in the Hindu religion who do not accept the primacy of monotheism as the core of their religion opine that it is a misconception conspired by other religious factions against their religion. And they even venture to misinterpret the Vedic saying which explicitly drop a hint to the monotheistic implications present in them as the lessons on non – duality or monism. But these are realities grasped and propagated by the great masters of Hinduism and the leaders of renaissance like, Raja Ram Mohan Roy,

single Absolute power as the creator and sustainer of the universe.

"The people of ancient India were monotheists. All those who conducted studies on the methods of their worship have confirmed this. The Supreme being which has been made mention of through such glorifying attributes as Ishanadi by the Vedas and Aronaniyan by the Upanishads is the same Almighty whom the Aryans have always worshipped since the beginning of creation. It was believed not only by a few Aryans alone that the Aryans had worshipped innumerable goddesses and Ghosts, certain Europeans have also held the same erroneous view of holding fast to this untruth. Here the truth is that what had been grasped as fire etc from ancient scriptures stood for Almighty God who was to be worshipped. And they have worshipped so long that Almighty alone" (Vedaparyadanam, Dayanda Saraswathy, Vaidika Sahithya Parishat, Chengannur). Rendered in to English by the translator

Not Embodied in Physical Body

The corner-stone of the doctrine of monotheism is the conviction that God is immaterial in existence. The practice of creating idols and images of God takes its origin from the false assumption that God is concrete in existence – hence having the physical body. Unfortunately to day it has become part of the Hindu propaganda to circulate idols and images to attract believers to the fold. But the fundamental Hindu scriptures irrefutably make it clear that God has no physical body.

I. Parya Gachechye Kramakayamapranamasna
Virashuddha Mapapaviddham Kaveer Maneeshi

Paribhra Swayem Bhuryadha Thadhyathordhan
Viddhvath Shashwatheebhya Samabhya (Yajur Veda 40-8)

(Though transcendental and immanent,
He is devoid of corporeal body;
Nor bound up with flesh and blood!
Mighty and swift, but more mild and simple
In attributes; with no imprint of ill – fame or sin
Thus he occupies every where, the supreme Almighty,
As omniscient and self-begotten!
Vouchssafing knowledge and light.
To his own devotees through Vedic Revelations!)

II. Avyaktham Vyakthimapanam
Manyanthae Mamabudhaya
Param Bhavamajanntho
Mama Vyayamanuthamam
Naham Prakasha Sarvasya
Yogamaya Samavrutha
Muddoyam Nabhijanathi
Loko Mamajamavyayam
(Bhagavat Gita 7-24, 25)

(The unmanifest as reduced in to manifestation:
The ignorant regard me;
My supreme nature not knowing-imperishable, unsurpassed.
I am not plain to all, being cloaked by my yogamaya;
This foolish world does not know me; un-born, immortal.)

Mahadev Govinda Ranade and Dayananada Saraswathy etc. Raja Ram Mohan Roy opines that the major Hindu scriptures of antiquity are all such as enjoin either monotheism or the worship of a single God. In order to prove this claim he published a translation of the Vedas and five other important Upanishads in Bengali. Moreover, in support of the relevance of monotheism he published again series of different pamphlets even. In 1809 Raja Ram Mohan Roy completed his famous book "Gift to the monotheists" in Persian. In this work he had provided much space for massive discourses that called for the adoption of monotheism as against the practice of polytheism. By 1929 he founded his religious organization, the Brahmasabha (Later renamed as Brahma Samaj), the aims of which were the refining of the Hindu religion by purging it of its disbeliefs and establishing the message of monotheism in the minds of the people.

Prarthana Samaj is another movement which evolved here as part of the re-awakening of Hinduism during the renaissance period in India. Like that of the Brahmasamaj the dissemination of monotheism was one among its various primary aims. (India Charitham, Vol 2, Page 238, Kerala Bhasha, Institute 1987).

"The Aryasamaj is a Hindu revivalist movement still functioning actively in India. Its basic aim among the many is the propagation of the message that it is monotheism what is proclaimed by the Vedas. Its founder Dayananda Saraswathy has established this truth through some of his books like Sathyardha Prakasham, Vedaparayatanam etc. Not only that, he also fought tooth and nail against the doctrine of non - duality which had already begun to make headway in the place of the doctrine of monotheism. He says "if the dogma that the

individual soul and the Eternal soul are one and the same and the universe but a shadow of illusion is propounded and promulagated by Sankara himself, that creed is lacking in reliability". If it was in order to outwit the jains that he had adopted such an article of faith, it would be far more better and acceptable". (Sathyardha Paraksham, Kerala Arya Samaj Mission, Kozhikode).

The doctrine of non – duality or monism that Sree Sankara promulgated was neither the revelation of the Vedas nor the command of God. The debates and contention he had designed for preventing the progress of Jainism which had been growing as a menace to Hinduism could be assessed or acknowledged according as to what extent they had been successful in vanquishing Jainism. And what could be summed up is that the doctrine of non – duality has no more relevance than this. Look how high Dayananda Saraswathy rises up in a fit of fury against the doctrine of non – duality.

"Hey, votaries of untruth, it is regrettable that you termed God an image of unrealistic existence while in reality he is perpetual in attributes, transcendental in existence. Might not this be a cause for your degradation?. And in which ever Upanishad or in whichever scripture or in whichever Veda has it been written that the Almighty be an illusion or the creation of mere imagination. This compares with the proverb that the thief pronounced a verdict of guilty on the police personnel after the thievery, the propriety of which is not in accordance with the traditional custom and about which there could have been no question of impropriety if the incident had turned the other way around. In the same way while you are unrealistic and illusory yourselves in thought and imagination, what you have done to justify yourselves is

to ascribe your own flaws to the Everlasting with impunity. If even a merest part of the Supreme soul happens to be promoting a false idea or holding fallacious notions or causing delusion around, the whole of the Supreme soul becomes permeated through with the same noxious blight, because the eternal soul is one unique entity. That which you call wisdom turns out unwisdom and the merti of your imputations meet with a rebuff as illusion, because what else can it be other than lack of insight to identity the living soul with the Supreme soul and then the Supreme soul with the individual soul when neither of them could be seen as being the other". (Sathyardha Prakasham)

From these studies it becomes evident that the matters discussed in the Vedas have no bearing on the doctrine of monism and that it is the message of monotheism that has been made mention of in them. But those who reject the message of monotheism have long since been engaged in misinterpreting the precepts of monotheism as the instruction of monism.

Initially Hinduism was based on the concept of monotheism. Later the Hindu scholars began to introduce the doctrine of incarnation, the practice of idolatry and the vision – duality or monism as the criteria of the religious belief in Hindism. But the Vedas on the other hand cast aside them all as part of unbelief and continued to uphold the message of monotheism as the essence of their teachings. No concept of God in any religion melts away so soon in the misinterpretation of the priests or in the impact of the anti-Veda thought. That the concept of monotheism has so long obtained without being changed in the Vedas despite the misinterpretations and repeated attempts to camouflage its true nature is proof enough for

its genuineness as the real vision of the concept of God. The doctrine of non – duality was considered a sure weapon of defense against the repelling supremacy of monotheism. Though the fundamental precepts of the monistic philosophy were not rooted in the Vedas they were introduced among the believers as the noblest sayings of the Vedas, which in fact were only too well known as not being the sayings from them but the factitious creations of the Brahmanic priesthood. This makes the believers grow more religion-bound towards monism and discern it as a distinctive vision other than that which has been proclaimed by monotheism. If monotheism cannot be taken for granted as evolved out of the Vedic thought the conclusion we arrive at is that the Hindu religion is devoid of religious faith.

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Shruthabadhu and Viprabandhu. They were removed from their position and new priests who were skilled in sorcery and black magic were appointed in their places. Subandhu engaged in black magic against this along with his accessories. The other newly appointed priests came to know about this and they slew Subandhu. The remaining three friends of Subhandhu revided him to life again with the magic spell of their mysterious powers and Agnisapriya". (O.M.C Narayanan Namboothiripad, Irgveda Bhasha Bhashyam, volume – 8, D.C Books, Kottayam) Rendered in to English by the translator.

The fiftyeighth stanza of Dashama Mandala comprises the mournful prayer uttered by Bandhu Shrutha Bandhu and Viprabandhu in lamentation for their slain companion. As has been mentioned in the Upanishads no allusion to any birth as occurring in repeated cycles in this world nor to any moral decline in any of the previous births as the fore-runner of the present birth has been made in this stanza. Much as would be taken for granted such sayings from the Veda or any other holy utterances for that matter as the proof of the doctrine of re-birth, it remains to be asked whether the followers of Hindu religion would take it imperative that they should hold prayers either on their own or in congregation to be born again as re-birth through proper wombs here after death. And what follows from these facts is the truth that the Vedas contain no sayings in them that speak up the reliability of the doctrine of re-birth. The people of ancient India were believers in the hereafter where they thought the evil-minded wrong doers would be doomed to the never ending hell-fire and the virtuous minded noble soul to a life of perpetual peace and happiness. The renowned Vedic scholar Swamy Ranganathananda expounds the allusion made in the Vedas to the two paths which the soul

is supposed to take after death. "In our ancient Vedic literature, we find mention of two paths taken by the soul after death. One is called "Dhumadi" Marga, the path beginning with smoke and associated with darkness: and the other is called "Arciradi Marga", the path beginning with flame and associated with light. These paths are also named Pitryana, the path of the manes, and "Devayana", the path of the gods, respectively. The first path is for those who have lived the ordinary life motivated by self-interest, without seeking any transcendental spiritual value. This path is also associated with the "Daksinayana", the southern path of the sun. Those who have lived a good life, on the other hand, and also sought higher spiritual values through meditation, go by the second path, the "Devayana", which is associated with "Uttarayana", the northern movement of the sun. Now it is difficult to understand what exactly is meant by the eschatology of these two paths." (The Message of the Upanisads, Swamy Ranganathananda, Page 164)

This statement is the result of a frank outlook on the concept of the after – life expounded in the Vedas. While the first of the two visions refers to hell-fire, the second denotes the blissful state of heaven. But the Vedas of the present day lack any praise-worthy exposition of the hereafter or its qualitative attributes. That is why Swamy Ranganathananda opines "we are at a loss to get at the essence of these two visions". But the scholars of the Upanishads did note lend much credence to the Vedic visualization about the other-world. They criticized those who believed in the hereafter and replaced that belief with another in their minds. Let us see what Ranganathananda has got to say, "But the Upanisads were not satisfied with

5 Belief in the Other World

Man's belief in an after-life signifies his fundamental views about the scheme of things that follow death. The overall consequences of one's deeds in his worldly life determine his triumphs and failures in the next world. Almost all the divine visions of the world hold the ultimate truth that a steadfast belief in the creator dissuades the people from evil deeds and instills in them a desire for deeds which are good and virtuous. The Hindu-Judaic and the Christian-Islamic revelations contain ample proof of this. In spite of the fact that the doctrine of the other-world has been distorted by man's wanton interference from time to time, the holy hymns and utterances that make mentions of the bliss of heaven and the tortures of hell-fire both of which form part of the transcendental hereafter still remain in the Hindu Vedas and in their supplements though with alterations made.

In the Vedas

"Thisredya vassavithurdwa upasdhah
Eakayamasya bhuvanae virashat
Aneehm naradhya mamruthadhi thasdhu
Rihabravee thuya uthah chikethal"

(Rig Veda 1-35-6)

(The brightening three world are the earth, heaven and the firmament of these haven and the earth remain in the proximity of the sun illuminated by it. Through the firmament is the proper way to reach the abode of the god

of death. (The dead travel through the firmament for the world of their fore-father) The celestial bodies such as the moon and stars keep on moving about the sun in a bonding of inseparable ties like how the wheel-pin in an axle is to the chariot. Let whosoever possesses the knowledge of the solar world speak about it.)

"Aryea agnea maheathwa danaya sameedhee mahi
Eetishwa himahea vrushan dyava hothraya pruthivi"
(Sama Veda-Agneayakantam: 93)

(The most indulgent gratifier of wishes and whims, our God!
We do propitiate you to receive our most desired Munificence from you!
We glorify thee, Lord, for the growth of wisdom And peace in the world!
And in the here-after, too, for the same peace and tranquility)

"Pray you, spouses, indulge in god deeds!
Think of the other world that we go after death!
(Adarva Veda 6-122-3)

The above hymns from the Irg, sama and Adarva Vedas make explicit allusions to a life-death. The first hymn makes it clear that the earth and heaven remain near to the sun and that the dead travel through the firmament to reach the here-after. The mention of a heaven in this hymn drops a hint that there is yet another world besides the earth. The explanation of the translator of the Irgveda O.M.C Narayana Namboothiripad that the dead travel through the firmament to the world of their manes given

4 The Doctrine of Re-birth

Belief in the hereafter forms the basis of the doctrine of re-birth in the Hindu religion. Those who were given to immoral worldly life will be destined to be born again here either as a male dog or as pariah. And those who were morally upright here without vices will be born again either as a Brahmin, Kshathriya or a Vasishya. But it was not in this way that the people of ancient India had believed the doctrine of re-birth as the changed state of existence through death and birth. Their belief was in the hereafter where the departed soul of the dead will be awarded either the tortures of hell-fire or the everlasting bliss of heaven according as the merit of their deeds in their bygone worldly life. It was this original belief of the ancient people that later on came to be known as the doctrine of re-birth.

Non-Vedic Philosophy

The doctrine of re-birth has not been mentioned in Vedas. None of the four Vedas speaks about the ways of attaining penance and absolution through repeated death and birth again in this world following death. The people of India had never cherished the belief that they would keep on attaining rewards and punishments through repeated death and birth in this world until the period of the "Brahmanas" ceased to obtain here. It was with the emergence of the Upanishads that such a belief took shape

here. Dr. Radhakrishnan writes on this in his self-assertive tone. "the Brahmana assumes births and deaths only in the next world. In the Upanisads the belief is transformed in to the doctrine of rebirth in the world" (Indian philosophy, Vol. 1, Page 249)

The doctrine of re-birth which is an alien dogma to the Vedas and the Brahmanas is a contribution from the Upanisads. It was advanced by the early Upanisads which were composed around 600 B.C. The chandogyopanishad and the Bruhadaranyakaupanishad bear ample proof to the fact that this doctrine was a creation of the Upanishads. Let Dr. Radhakrishnan himself speak on the authorship of this doctrine which was later on added to the Hindu religion by the ascetics. "We meet with the belief in the soul as a moving life principle. In X. 58, the soul of an apparently unconscious man is invited to come back to him from the trees, the sky and the sun. Evidently it was thought that the soul could be separated from the body in certain abnormal conditions. All these, however does not imply that the Vedic Aryans were familiar with the conception of rebirth". (Indian Philosophy, Vol. 1, Page 116)

The above quote of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan from the Veda is the same as many a person has relied upon to justify their contention that the doctrine of re-birth was always there in the Vedas as its inherent part. But this cannot be taken as a proof that this doctrine has ever been a part of it as Dr. Radhakrishnan himself has observed. It is only when the backdrop against which such a saying was formulated is also taken in to account and assessed that the whole matter turns out more convincing. 'King Asamathi whose lineage traces to the Ikshaku race had under him four priests named Bandhu, Subadhu,

these two paths. They discovered a third alternative in jivanmukti". (The Message of the Vedas, Page 165).

Here begins the subtlety of the concept of the hereafter in the Hindu religion and it has not yet ceased to be. The masters of the Upanishads subjected the concept of the hereafter and the belief in the existence of hell and heaven which formed part of the concept to an austere scrutiny and labelled them 'humbeg' holding out no approval. They relinquished the belief of the Vedas in the hereafter and through an alien view of their own contrivance made it in to the doctrine of re-birth as we see it at the present day. The critical standpoint of the scholars towards the basic principles and beliefs of the Vedas paved the way for a change in attitude about the Vedas and a dialectical change in outlooks towards their message.

The Doctrine from the Upanishad

The story from the Upanishad which introduced the doctrine of re-birth for the first time brings to light the fact that it was a detached vision other than that of God and an unfamiliar one to the religious spirit of the Vedic Aryans. King Aruny's son Shwethakethu after acquiring all the knowledge from his father himself arrived in the royal assembley of the Panchalas. At the assembly it happened that he could not find answers to the questions put before him by the Kshathriya scholar "Pravahana" concerning the life after death. Thus the set of answers which the Kshathriya scholar himself provided for his questions constitutes the doctrine of re-birth as we see it today.

Now, let us look at what the Chandogyopanishad has to say about the occurrence of births that repeat themselves in this world after death.

"They appear in the heavens and come round
In the firmament!
In the firmament they become smog!
From smog they go altered in to mist
From mist they get transformed in to clouds
And thence as rain they come down to earth!
Thereafter, they begin to germinate here
In different states and shapes!
As Paddy, barley, herbs, trees, sesame, black gram
And so forth! (Chandogyopanishad, 5-10-6)

Nor is that alone! "Men of virtuous deeds take birth in noble (Brahminic) wombs! And those of evil deeds take birth in those of dogs, swines or in pariah women's". (Chandogyopanishad, 5-10-7). Before teaching this doctrine of re-birth to the king the Kshthriya scholar added this much more to what he had said previously.

"About this subject which your lordship has condescended to astk of me there is yet a little more to be grasped. Prior to your Lorship's possessing this knowledge it was never taught to the Brahmins, so that before any humans came to know of this, only the Kshathriyas remained entitled to possess it. But in spite of that I feel myself bound to be obliged before your Lorship to impart that which I know about it unto you" (Chandogyopanishad, 5-3-7).

On examining this description from the Chandogyopanishad what becomes evident is the truth that the doctrine of re-birth had its origin in the Upanishad not in the Vedas. It has also been positively affirmed by

the same Chandogyopanishad that this doctrine had so long remained unrevealed to the Brahmins who are the followers of the Vedas and who remain enlightened about them. King Aruny was the first Brahmin who was to receive the knowledge of the doctrine of re-birth which maintains that repeated occurrences of re-birth follow from period to period in the world. And it has openly been said that this doctrine which the Kshathriyas alone had the privilege to acquire was unknown to the Brahmins. Not only that, neither has the Claim laid to the paternity of the doctrine of re-birth by the Upanisads yet been called in question by any scholars from the Hindu community including such scholars as Dayananda Saraswathy and so forth. These facts bring to light the truth that the doctrine of re-birth was unknown to the people of ancient India. And by the final analysis what conclusion do the majority of scholars unanimously reach is that the doctrine of re-birth was not propounded by the Vedas. "While the conceptions of Karma and rebirth are unquestionably the work of the Aryan mind, it need not be denied that the suggestion may have come from the aborigines, who believed that after death their souls lived in animal bodies." (Indian philosophy, Vol. 1 Page 136 Dr. Radhakrishnan)

Renowned histotians like R.C Majumdar, H.C Roy Choudhary, Kalikinker Dutta etc have historically confirmed the fact that the doctrine of re-birth was not in prevalence during the Vedic period. And all those who have conducted analytical studied about the doctrine of re-birth in factual ways unequivocally confirm the fact that it might have been propounded by the Upanisads.

The following are the main inferences derived from the foregoing analysis of the documentary evidences on the doctrine of re-birth.

I. The doctrine of re-birth was unknown to the people of India in the Vedic period

II. The belief that man is pre-ordained to suffer the trials and tribulation of this wordly life through repeated births here has not been hinted at either in the Vedas or in any of their scriptural supplements.

III. The doctrine of re-birth is a contrivance by the scholars of the Upanisads sought in defiance of the message of the Vedas which had proclaimed belief in the other-world.

IV. The doctrine of re-birth might have been the product of the tribal belief that the spirits of the dead abided with the bodies of animals.

V. What had prompted the masters of the Upanishads to contrive the doctrine of re-birth was their unknowing about the essence of the two ways in to which the departed souls migrate following death, namely the heavenly way in to which the souls of the virtuous will be ushered and the hellish way in to which the souls of the deprived will be doomed.

VI. King Aruny was the first Brahmin to receive the knowledge of the doctrine of re-birth. Before him only the Kshathriyas were entitled to possess it.

Illogical conception

The essence of the doctrine of re-birth is construed as an ordaining to suffer the outcome of the past deeds through repeated births in the worldly life. But the person who lived his life as libertine turns out to be born again in his second birth as a despicable being. From despicable beings seldom ensue the virtuous deeds. In their third birth the aftermath of the past deed quite probably tends to grow still worse. Thus, now that the souls of sinners are getting more and more degenerated over recurring births, how can they ever become able to attain to a noble birth in their lives. Human beings can imitate the animals in their attributes or in their behaviour, but not vice versa.

According to the doctrine of re-birth the birth of the high caste Brahmin is the outcome of the virtuous deeds of animals or pariahs which they have done in their previous births. If so, are not the pariahs or the animals whom we see today the aftermath of the misdeeds which some Brahmins did in their previous births. The doctrine of re-birth gives no chance of contrition for the sinners. Nor can they divert the course of their fate through reparation. In the like scheme of things the sinners tend to become more oriented towards committing sin, because the expectant retribution for sin in the coming birth is a detested mean repetition of the same life. And being aware of the fact that crime is inevitably followed by its attendant punishment, if man seeks for more pleasure and dissipation in his present birth, he is not to be blamed for that in the natural course of events as long as he is certain that his life in the next birth will be a doomed one.

That was why the Vedic thinker and deist Dr. S. Radhakrishnan adjudged that the doctrine of re-birth was an inadequate, blurred vision.

"They had no special doctrines about life after death, though some vague conceptions about heaven and hell could not be avoided by reflective minds. Rebirth is still at a distance. The Vedic Aryans were convinced that death was not the end of things" (Indian Philosophy, Vol. I, Page 113-114)

The doctrine of re-birth is an unjustifiable exhortation that there will follow no freedom from the trials and tribulation which are afflicting the world at present, so that all the injustices, atrocities and other harassments which the world is exposed to turn justifiable. But to those who view the divine vision as a source of uninterrupted flow of eternal justice and equality, the conception of the doctrine of re-birth must present itself to be an irrational idea with which neither the Vedas nor the revelation from God have any sympathy.

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by way of expatiating on the Vedic saying that the firmament is the proper way for the dead to travel to the abode of the god of death confirms the fact that it is the case of the here-after what has been made mention of in the Vedas.

The second hymn contains prayers in the form of the singing of glory to God for wisdom and peace to descend in the world and for peace in the here-after. Those who convince themselves of the logic and piety evinced through this prayer cannot deny the existence of the here-after alone as non-existent when the peace of that world has also been touched upon in the prayer, because these Vedic utterances maintain also the fact that belief in the here-after was part of the Vedic civilization.

The third saying is in the form of an advice to lead a virtuous life in expectation of the next world. This also contains messages about the next world and the ways to salvation through good deeds. What we become convinced of from all these is the fact that the people of the Vedic period were believers in an after-life. The late renowned Vedic thinker Rahul Samkruthyayan observes:

"The Vedic seers believed that there was another world dissimilar from ours in which we live today. Men of virtuous deeds go to that place after death and they live there quite happily ever after. Far below beneath it is the underworld where the abyss of hell-fire exists. The evil doers go to that place". (Vishwadarshangal, page- 552). This portion was rendered in to English by the translator.

The Vedic Aryans believed that after death they would meet with their kith and kin who had departed from them earlier and would thence on begin to live with them again.

What is revealed by the studies on the Vedas is that the people of ancient India believed in an after-life. At the scene of trial in that world of the dead the souls of both the evil doers and those of virtue doers become subjected to a verdict of reward and punishment. Then there follows the re-union with kith and kin who departed beforehand.

The Hindu community had viewed all these phenomena as part of the life in the here-after and held fast to that belief. They had even renounced their worldly life for attaining salvation in the here-after.

The Rigveda is replete with hymns that portray the emphemeral world as representing the mother and the here-after as representing the father as in the saying "Daurwa Pitha Vruthi Vi Matha" the converse of which implies that a virtuous worldly life is a filial service to the mother and the preparation for a noble life-after death the observance of a filial worship of the father. The people of ancient India were such staunch believers in an after-life that they even renounced their worldly life for that. And quite naturally the practice of renouncing the worldly attachments and holding fast to a belief in the here-after caused much concern and outrage among many scholars. "The plight of the man who lives in self-denial, secluded from worldly life, contemplating only the here-after, is like that of the one who does his filial service to father but forgets the matter of mother, such a lopsided filial service may be repugnant to a father. The tradition of giving paramount importance to matters spiritual in an awesome piety and laying aside all the matters of worldiness as trifles is the antique ideology of the Hindu civilization (V.K Narayanan Bhattathiri, Vedam Dharmamoolam, Page 70, Mathrubhumi, Publishing Company, 1987). This portion was rendered in to English by the translator.

At this juncture the Hindu philosophy and its outlook on the concept of eschatology as an article of faith need rather be subjected to a critical re-analysis. Today the eschatological belief of the Hindu followers which was emphasized by the Hindu philosophers and the Vedas has ceased to be part of their religious belief. It is not the original appearance of the ancient Hindu religion that we find today reflected from their vision of the here-after.

What we see today in the Hindu religion in place of the belief in the hereafter is the doctrine of re-birth which was propounded by the thinkers of the Upanisads, let alone that this belief in the here-after once formed part of the religion of the Vedic people. The constant efforts of the thinkers of the Upanisads were to do away with the doctrine of eschatology and to camouflage it with the doctrine of re-birth, but in spite of all that, they could not even free themselves of the influence of the Vedic belief in the here-after on them completely either. The following Upanisadic utterances well confirm our assumptions.

"An samparaya prathibhathi balam
Pramadruntham vittha moheana mootdam
Ayam loako nasthiparaithimani
Puna: Punarvasha ma padyathea mea"

(Katopanisad 2-6)

(The ignorant and the boastful, coveting wealth and pomp, forfeit discretion, turn unwise of the ceremonies and rites for attaining to the other world! Those that think the world they live in only is, the other non-existent, come in my subjugation time after time).

"Asurya nama te lokah andhena taamasavrtah!

Tamste pretyabhigahanti ye ke catmahano janah"
(Isa Upanisa-3)

(Born of the dignified human race!
Yet not attained the release of the soul!
such towards the world of the Asuras repair!
To that anti-god abode of the ignorant after death)

"Anadha Namaste lokah antenna theamasavrtah
Ta om ste precchabygacchantya!
Vidwa omseh budho janah"
(Brahadaranyaka Upanisad) 4-4-11

(This world of delight (of anguish) remains immersed in the dark of ignorance. The uniformed and the illiterate attain to that alone after death).

The first saying of the above is in the form of a reply to those who disbelieve in the other world. It has been explained in this saying that those who argue that only the world in which we live is there as substantial and the anticipated next world is non-existent will be brought up to the presence of God. Does not this include then the Hindu scholars as well who forsake belief in the here-after and keep on misinterpreting the Vedic utterances on the other world as the principles of the doctrine of re-birth? Those who have forsaken belief in the other world are addressed as" those who do not know the rites to attain the next world, whether they be the followers of re-birth or not. The argument of the unbelievers in the other – world that only this emphemeral world which is seen as existing is there and all the others are mere creations of imagery. But, even if the body is buried or committed to the flames

after death, all will end up being brought up before the presence of God one day.

See, how Dr. Radhakrishnan assesses the baseless doctrine that subverts the concept of eschatology. "No philosophy could discard its past. The Upanisad theory of future life had to reckon with the old Vedic doctrine of rewards and punishments. The conservative spirit of man tried to combine the new idea of rebirth with the earlier eschatology" (Indian philosophy, Vol. I, Page 252)

Dr. Radhakrishnan here makes it evident that the concept of re-birth is a novel idea and that it was the belief in another world which they thought would follow death that prevailed among the people of India from ancient times.

The essence of the second saying is that those who do not strive after the release of the soul (purification) will be destined to the worlds of gloom where the Asuras dwell. What is meant by the phrase the world of Asuras" is the world of hell. In other words, unless striven for the absolution of the soul surely retribution will follow death, but it is not that another birth will follow the present death. It is the case of the hereafter what has been spoken of here also.

In the third saying what has been described is that the unintelligent and the ignorant will go to the murky world of glooms. Nor is the essence of this saying different from those given above.

From the Bhagavat Gita

The Bhagavat Gita aso gives us undeniable hints to belief in the other world mentioned in the Vedas.

"Ajnas ca srdahhas ca
Sansayatna Vinasyati
Na yam loko sti na paro
Na sokham samsayatmanah" (Bhagavat Gita 4-40_

(The ignorant and the faithless and the doubting soul perishers!
Not this world, not the next, nor happiness for the doubting)

This hymn from the Gita is about those who forfeit in the other world. The ignorant and the doubting are prone to perish and are the destained losers of happiness both in the world and the other.

In The Epics

In addition to the superstitious speculation that we find in the epics about how to gain salvation, there can be found in them illustrations about the hereafter also. The scheme of things that evolves after death in the world of the dead remains beyond human perception. It has been asserted in the Malsya Purana" that even through austere meditation and rigorous penace one cannot get to know this mysterious riddle. So, as a matter of fact, what the epics exhort us is to endeavour to set right the ways of our lives as a prelude to acquiring welfare for the soul in the next world.

The Padma Purana is replete with exhortations to averting the imposition of the tortures of hell on us. Those who think of the female counter-parts of their fellow men as their own mothers will not be put in hell. Those who avoid illicit relations with another's woman will be

world might divert the Hindus from despicable atrocities and heinous excesses.

(Reason), because the ancient Hindus, who were believers in an after life, believed that a fortune amassed through illegal means did not constitute the basis of real prosperity.

The above descriptions represent the fundamental concept which once formed part of the Hindu faith concerning belief in the here-after. Human life does not cease to be with death. Nor could the idea of a continued life based on the merits of worldly deeds in the here-after be discarded as non-existent. Allusions in the Vedas and their supplements to this effect clearly bring out the truth. The rewards and punishments for man's deed cannot be excuted with completeness right by the criterion of worldly life, since they won't be compatible with the divine norms of universal justice with regards to perfection. That the doers of good be awarded the bliss of heaven and those of evil be punished with the tortures of hell – fire is the inevitable necessity of the divine justice. And if we are to fully bring out the importance of a belief in the after – life, where the wrong doers of the worldly life will be made to suffer the tortures of hell and those who did good deeds will be given the bliss of heaven to enjoy, the concepts of both hell and heaven also need be taken and subjected to an analytical study.

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5 The World of Hell

The idea of the after-life becomes imperfect on its being divested of "Hell and Heaven". The after-life comprises in it an ideal of rewards and punishments based on the resultant merits of one's worldly deeds. It is important to note how the Hindu scriptures view the belief in hell and heaven which advocates the annihilation of that which is bad and the uplift of that which is good.

The net result of all the sins that a man does in his worldly life is the award of hell that he receives after death. The world of hell comprises men of atrocities, aggressors and other souls of outrages. The Vedas and their supplements give us descriptive illustrations about them. The concept of the divine absolute, the 'Almighty' that transcends the whole universe, is also present as innate in the vision of hell and heaven. And it has been asserted by the Hindu scriptures all the more that there will be awards for worldly virtues and punishments for worldly sins after death.

That the moral deeds deserve awards and immoral deeds punishment is the underlying principle of the divine justice. But, what has gained prevalence among the present day Hindu community as the accepted truth about the concept of hell in the here-after is that it is the worldly life itself where we live today what is meant by the concept of hell.

In the Vedas

Abrataroh nayoscano vrntah:
Patiri ponah janayo durae vah
Papasassantoh anyata asatyam
Idam padmajanatah Gambheeram (Irg Veda 45-5)

(Like the widowed women who have no kith and kin or other siblings return from the houses of their husbands to their paternal homes, those who move about in immoral ways forsaking religious rituals and other sacrificial ceremonies turn ill-oriented, wicked sinners, like the women who have done their husband spiteful deceptions. Those who renounce the path of truth both by way of deed and by way of word are the real makers of the dreadful hell for sinners).

This saying from the Irg Veda is about those who deserve to be punished in hell. The notion that "those who fail to maintain commitment to truth in mind and thought and those that have forsaken it altogether are the true makers of hell" takes us to the conclusion that an allusion to hell denotes an entity that remains beyond our perception of the material universe.

Many a Vedic scholar has introduced to us the illustrations of hell as was drawn by the Vedas. Is there a place called hell for those who were given to immoral deeds and for those that remained atheists as sinners against godliness? Investigator and scholar Dr. Radhakrishnan gives us the answer to this question. "If the heaven is only for the pious and the good, then the evil-minded cannot be extinguished at death nor can they reach heaven. So a hell is necessary. We hear of varuna thrusting the evil doer down in to the dark abyss from which he never returns. Indira is prayed to consign to the

ushered in to heaven to ensconse themselves there with impunity. The epics hold the moral view that those who do not venture to deprive woman folks of their chastity and are accustomed to harnessing their anger are the ones who will come out triumphant in the other world.

The "Malsya Purana" gives descriptive allusions to the joys and sorrows of the other world". Those who were morally upright in their worldly life will be given entry to heaven to live happily thence on with the ancestors of gods who have already been the joys inmates there. This place of refuge will be granted to those who have bred children and who have made solemn offering to the departed as a ritual. The souls of those who have been offered the obsequies by kith and kin from families remain high in their heavenly abode devouring the ceremonial offerings monthly made to them. And it has it that these human ancestors are the ones that devour the offerings made each month.

The souls of those who failed in obeying the moral principles and fought shy of observing the rituals of making offering and other sacrifices enjoined for the sanctification of life turn in to satanic shapes within the domain of Yama, the god of death, in perpetual contrition of their past misdeeds under tortures of hell-fire. Haggard-faced, emaciated, growing matted hair, whisker and moustache, making a dash here and there in the nude and suffering the extremes of hunger and thirst, they roam about in search of some rivers, rivulets, ponds or at least something to eat. The soldiers of yama take them and put in such hells as the, Shashmaly, Vaitharany, Kumbheebhagam, Ardhavalukam, Aseepathravanam, etc. (Malsya Puranam, Page 195, Vibysthi Mithram, Kottayam

(Malayalam 1976). Rendered in to English by the translator.

The fastness and depth of belief which the vision of the Hindus held in the existence of the other world could be noticed in the "Mahadevi Bhagavatha" also. This work which is looked upon as a supplement to the epics also sheds light on the belief of the ancient Hindus in the other world and its constituents hell and heaven.

"Underneath the surface of this land visible,
Where forms the bottomless world above south!
Exists the world of the forbears departed
Which comes in forefront of the three in fame!
And as the well wishers of all who pass that way
Abide therein the departed souls of the forbears,
Where reigns over Yama, the Lord of the world of spirits,
But, renowned for justice in all the three worlds!
Thus, he excels in his throne ever shone,
This god of death
No sooner did the beings be dead than makes them
Brought up before him for trial by servants
Contrasting the deeds of the departed souls
For pronouncing his verdicts for or against, Narada

(Translation in to Malayalam by Pandit K.K Panicker) Maha Devi Bhagavatham). This portion was rendered in to English by the translator of the book.

These exhortations point to the ways "Divine justice" executed in the other world by meting out rewards for virtues and punishments for vices. Surely, exhortations such as these do entice the believers to good and dissuade them from bad. Belief that the results of what one does in this world, whether good or bad, follow them in the other

lower darkness the man who injures his worshipper". (Indian philosophy Page 115)

A divine law which gives no place for hell in it is lacking in logic and justice. If there is no punishment or its preceding fore-warning in the divine law, the very meaning for which the divine justice stands is lost. The Almighty who metes out equal justice to all creatures has to bring under his subjugation and punish the aggressors and the immoral who reign over their fellow creatures subduing them under suppression. The revelations of such punishment carry with them the inevitable promises and the proof that they are from divine origin.

In the Upanisads

Besides in the Vedas there are mentions of hell in the Upanisads also

Ataika yordha hudana punyena

Punyam lokam nayati papena

Papamubhabhyameva manuscyalokam
(Prashnopanisal, Munnam, Prashnam-7)

Swamy Muddanantha translates this hymn some-what like this. "Among the hundred and one arterial nerves there is one main nerve named the spinal cord which goes upwards. One of the vital airs of the body which is always on the move from foot to head goes out through that nerve and takes those who have done virtuous deeds to the high worlds of virtues and those who have done sinful deeds to the hell – like wombs of animals"

What comes clear on examining this interpretation given to hell in the Veda is that the obvious truth of a fundamental divine revelation has been to lay messed up

in the legendary fables pertaining to rebirth. This hymn that promises a noble world of virtues for those who have done good deeds promises neither a world of sins nor an abyss or hell for those who have done despicable deeds, but only doomed births in hell – like wombs of animals. This is a delusive contrivance designed by the scholars of the Upanisads in order to misinterpret the divine truth of the other-world as a theory of rebirth and the worldly life as the stereotype of the tortures of hell. It seems an acknowledged fact by all that nowhere other than in the divine code of laws there occurs the concept of a world of hell and heaven. And another note-worthy thing to be considered here is that the very phrase "hell – like" which the interpreter himself has used does drop a hint that hell and the concept of hell were very familiar things to the Hindu religion.

In the Bhagavad Gita

Mentions of hell can be found in the Bhagavad Gita also which is held in high esteem by the Hindu scholars and promulgated.

Anekacittavibhrante
Mahajalasamvrtah
Prasaktah kamabhogesu
Patanti narake sucau" (Bhagavad Gita 16-16)

(By countless fancies confounded, in delusion's net ensnared; addicted to satisfying lust
they fall in to fetid hell)

"The palace of sinners where they are sent after death to suffer for their deeds," is the meaning given hell. It has

got no other meanings such as the noble whom or rebirth. So the case of hell mentioned by the Gita is of that which is corresponding to heaven. If the real seeking of the Hindu religion were after rebirth for a belief, there would be no mentions either of the other world or of one of its essential parts hell in the Gita.

In Epics

There are copious expatiations on hell in epics. Majority of them portray the tortures of hell and the overall conditions of their inmates in an explanatory way. The types of hell where man is punished for his crime on earth are many. Some of their names are, Thapanam, Baluka, Kumbham, Rauravam, Maharauravam, Niruchuvasam, Kalaasuthram, Pramardanam, Asipathravanam and so forth. The descriptions about the punishments in some of them given in "Narada Purana" or the epic of Narada are as follows.

Angara Shayana and Musala Mardhana comprise in them wooden fittings. That hell is for cutting up sinners. The sinners are thrown in to them and thence hurled upwards in a sudden swirling swish. The name of hell that keeps on beating up sinners with clubs and bars is Gada Dandtadi Peeta.

In certain hells sinners are made to be bitten by poisonous serpents. Pumps cold water in to their mouths and nostrils. Keeps on making them drink salt water continuously and eat only salt. Cuts their veins and batter the bones to pieces. keeps on holding them immersed in burning hot water. Makes them eat meat, phlegm and human discharges and drops them down from the top of elongated trees.

There are some other hells also. Heavy stones are placed on heads in those hells. Makes lie the sinners on beds of thorns and makes them be bitten by ants. Makes them be stung by frightening scorpions and makes them be involved in grappling with tigers, leopards and buffaloes. Makes them lie in squalid mud and anoin them with fetid substance and makes them keep on sitting and standing off and on to ward off sleep. In some other hells the sinners are made to eat the most unbearable substances of pungent smell and taste and give them boiling oil to drink. They are made to eat the most sickerning bitter fruits and are made to take bath in the hottest and coldest waters. They lay them on red hot iron. Place weighty lump of iron on the head.

Besides all these, there are also other hells which are most formidable and frightening with lurking atrocities where the punishments are inflicted with weapons and fire. These were all created for fostering a sense of human values in man and to divert the attention of the human community from the degrading thoughts of immorality. And below follow the important hells the mentions of which have been made in the Vishnu Purana.

I. Gauravam: Those who stand false witness, the judges who fail to execute justice and act in terms of partiality rather than justice and the unfaithful who fail to discharge honesty. These people go to this hell.

II. Thathakuntam: This hell is for those who have been convicted of sexual intercourse either with the wife of their preceptor or with their own sister. And besides them, the persons who slay the servants of a king also go to this hell.

III. Thaptha Loham: Those who turn dishonest to chaste wives by selling them to others, those who break in prisons and help escape the prisoners. Those who sell out their horses and those who relinquish their faithful servants. This hell is for such people.

IV. Maha Jwala Narakam: Those who indulge in sexual inter course either with their daughters – in –law or with their own daughters and those who disrespect or reproach the preceptors or the aged are to be put in this hell.

V. Levana Narakam: This hell is for those who hold a sacrilegious attitude to the Vedas and for those who maintain illicit relations in life.

VI. Adhomukha Narakam: Those who receive alms from the incompetent. Those who make do sacrifices with the unreserved and those who profess to be adroit in astrology for a livelihood. These people will be made to enter this hell.

Besides these, in "Mahadevi Bhagavatha" also descriptions about formidable hells can be seen.

1. They take them tied up with rope,
   Commit direct to hell "Thamisra", O sage!
   All the way inflicting heavy blows,
   Taking no pity, nor a sign of commiseration,
   The servants of the king of death;
   On the marauders who usurp the wealth,
   Wives and children, alas, of the alien, desolate!

2. "Like the wife who turns delusive to husband
   For a loaf of bread,
   The husband who conceals delusions in bread

To her, too;
The servants of the god of death with rope
Tie up,
As not be free to move about but cry and groan
With pain!
Leave in "Andhatha Misram" the one among many hells"

3. "The smouldering embers of the burning flame
Consume the wicked and the cruel demons!
Treating teacher and parents in scorn and loathing
Disdaining them at their own sweet will
Hurled in "Kala Suthra" by the servants of the god of death"

4. Hell, "Asipathra" named, pre-ordained for the lawless
Acting against the rules of Vedic faith
Striking and whipping hither and thither,
Walking them on, excising limbs in between with sword!
Thus unleashing all loads of tortures on them the most!
The band of servants in the world of death be there, O pillar – sage!

5. Hell "Sukaramukham", destined for despots
Of cruel punishment caring no justice,
Swallows up beaten like a sugar-cane
The whole frame of such caught in coercion
By the servants of the god of death!
(Rendered in to English by the translator)

Besides those mentioned above the epics have it that there are still thousands of hells. The sinners will undergo unaccountable trials and tribulations and other sufferings

reward for one's deeds. All the above are ample proofs that the people of the Irg Veda period were stead fast believers in an after – life and its constituents hell and heaven.

It is the picture of the life-after – death that has been brought to light by the Vedic utterances. The people of the Vedic period had belief in an after-life and the scenes of joys and sorrows that would turn up there. According to their article of faith Yama is the incumbent of the other-world. They believed that when a man died he arrived there at the Yama's. He accommodates there those who were good. On being deprived of the physical body the soul assumes an exalted spiritual form. Repairs to the world do immortal goddesses where Yama and the souls of fore-fathers dwell. Those of the dead who are entitled to a life in heaven have to travel through water and negotiate a bridge before reaching the world of heaven.

It was not only as a dream-world of celestial pleasures given for good deeds as a reward, but as an uplifted high place of perpetual divine peace and prosperity as well, that the Hindu community had viewed the idea of heaven. "The departed souls dwell in heaven revelling with Yama. They there live an existence like ours, the joys of heaven are those of earth perfected and heightened. "These bright things are the portion of those who bestow largesses, there are suns for them in heaven; they attain immortality; they prolong their lives" stress is sometimes laid on the sensuous character in the Vedic picture of future life." (Indian philosophy page 114)

What transpires from the above statements is the fact that the Vedas have put forward the vision of a divine revelation which is based on facts and logic about hell and heaven and the after-life which comprises them. Here it

also seems noteworthy that the belief in an afterlife which hell and heaven constitute formed part of the Hindu article of faith though it was later made blurred and obliterate through the misinterpretations by the exponents of rebirth.

In the Upanisads

The thinkers of the Upanisads could not evade the pictures of heaven exposed by the Vedas.

"Swarge Lokae Nabhayam Nancanasti
Nathattwam najarayabibheti
Ubhetheertwam sanaya piprsae
Sokatigo madatae swargalokae (Katopanisad 1-12)

(In heaven no cause for anxiety such as illness and so on. The god of death wields not the power of his reign over there. Nor is there the onslaught of decrepitude. No hunger or thirst to put the dwellers in difficulty. Thus without sorrows all abide there in heaven.)

"Yova etamevam vedapahatya
Vapmana manantre swargae lokae
Jyoyae pratitischtiti pratitisctiti" (Kenopanisad 4-9)

(Those that get to know this Upanishad as such attain to the Absolute in the transcendental heaven. Absolved of all sins become perpetual in that transcendence.)

The only one affirmation that the second utterance gives us is of the existence of heaven. But that denotation itself is part of the belief in heaven and the other world. In spite of that, in the first utterance there has been given some-what an enlarged picture of heaven. This utterance proclaims the fact that heaven is the world where unhappiness or boredom is nonexistent and that prosperity and delightfulness alone play there always. If there had

there. All those who have committed wrongs by word or deed will stay put there in hell.

Adulterers, murderers, false witnesses, debauchers, the discourteous, atheists, flatteres, talebearers, the boastful, those who think and speak ill of others, those who covet the possessions of others will all be destined to be in hell.

The servants who guard over hell show no leniency towards those who were immoral in worldly life. Their behaviour to the inmates of hell is haughty and uncouth. In the Garuta Purana the servants of the world of death speak to the inmates of hell". "You all roughnecks, damned rogues, now why fret about the past events and keep on weeping like this about the bygones. Where have your possessions gone here now; nor have you got your son or wife here for you? You are destined to live here suffering the tortures for your deeds for long in this endless world" (Garuta – Narda – Brahma Puranangal – Page 328). Rendered in to English by the translator.

What becomes explicit from this command of the servants of hell to the inmates is that none of man's worldly possessions, children, nor any of his kith and kin can shield him against the divine decree on him in the here after, but only the good deeds he did in his worldly life.

We have so far seen the varied illustrations of hell as drawn by the authoritative Hindu scriptures such as the Vedas, Upanisads, Bhagavad Gita and the Epics. The narrations from these scriptures acknowledge the belief in an after life, but deny any belief in rebirth. And it was because the belief in an after life had been part of the Hindu philosophy that the Vedas and their supplementary scriptures took to making comments on hell and its

qualitative attributes. Those who venture to deny belief in the hereafter are undoubtedly getting themselves involved in the error of rejecting a basic faith of the Hindu religion. Those who argue that it was the belief in rebirth which had been propounded by the Hindu religion as against the notion that it was the belief in the here-after, are meddling with the divine vision to alter it to the liking of human speculation.

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7 Heaven

In the Vedic philosophy heaven is more or less the same in importance as hell. While hell is occupied by sinners and the moral degenerates, heaven is occupied by the doers of noble deeds. In the Vedas and in the supplements to them there are numerous allusions to heaven which forms an inseparable part of the here-after.

In the Vedas

"Indraya hidyenara suroh anamnate
Ndraya maheprthivee varimabhi
Dyumnasata varimabhi
Indram vishwesajoscasoh devasoh
Indrya vishwasa vanani manuscadadhire purah
Rata nisantu manusca" (Irg Veda, 1-131-1)

(Heaven is where only the virtuous who did good deeds get ushered in and the others who did not do them go forbidden. There, the occupants, Devas, make obeisance to Indra. Like that the expanding surface of the earth, the humans living therein, by chanting their exacted holy hymns, kneel down unto thee. The lords, offerings in hands, make genuflexion unto thee for the growth of prosperity (for fortunes). And all the Devas are stood thee fed up with complacence likewise. In the same way, let there come to pass on Indra all the holy things offered in sacrifice, all the essentials procured for sacrifice)

"Yangjena vardhata jatavedasa

Magnim jayadlim scatanahira
Samidhanam suprayasam swarnaram
Dyukscam hotaram vrjanesctsa dhuscadam"
(Irgveda 2-2-1)

(O, Lords who sustain the worlds, with sacrifice foster the fire which knows all things that have been. That burns up in high flames devouring good food and that takes those who do virtues to heaven. By the holy hymns and ghee propitiate that glowing performer of sacrifice. That creator of might among the mighty)

"Tena satyena jagrta
Madhi pracatuneh padaeh
Indrani shrmayaschatam" (Irgveda 1-21-6)

(Hey, Indra, be bounteous of vouchsafing the preferred heavenly bliss by heaven to us, not forfeited by the inexorable fate of the bad luck of our spoilt deeds. And bless us by conferring your benedictions of perpetual happiness on us).

Heaven which is full of happiness, joy and other kinds of delights and blissfulness is the reward man is given in his after life for the virtues he did in his worldly life. This fact is evident in the three sayings given above from the Irg Veda. That which is open only to those who did virtuous deeds and to others who did evil deeds which gives no entry is how heaven is introduced to us in the first saying. In the second saying God is described as the one who is to usher those who have done virtuous deeds in their previous lives in to heaven. The third saying is in the form of a prayer to attain the ecstatic world of heaven as a

been a belief in rebirth in Hinduism, there would have been given "The next or the second birth of the virtuous" instead of the phrase "in heaven" in this utterance, whereas it is "in heaven it self" what has been given in clear-cut terms in it. This is proof enough that the Hindu religion had obvious visions about the other-world and heaven which formed part of it.

The fact that there exists no disparity between the two concepts of heaven, namely the one portrayed by the Vedas and the other displayed by the Upanisads signifies the conclusion that the belief in the here-after was one of the constituent basic principles of the Hindu religion and that it was altered later, or rather, was abolished.

In The Bhagavad Gita

As was confirmed by the Upanisad the existence of heaven has been acknowledged by Bhagavad Gita also.

1. "Atha cet tvam imam dharmyam
   Samgramam na karisyasi
   Tatah svadharma kirtim ca
   Hitva papam apapsyasi (Bhagavad Gita 2-33)

(But if you do not fight this battle of Dharma, then, forsaking your Svadhrama and your fame, you will find sin)

2. Yajnasistamata bhujo
   Yanti brahma sanatanam
   Na, yam loko sty ayajnasya
   Kuto nyah kurusattam (Bhagavad Gita 4-31)

(Eating sacrificial remains, ambrosia, they go to eternal Brahman;

Not this world is for the unsacrificing, much less any other, best of kurus.)

In its comments on heaven the Bhagavad Gita states in the first utterance that those who do not fight the battle of Dharma lose heaven and in the second utterance it states that to those who do not perform the sacrifice heaven will be unattainable. The above exhortations to a theist Hindu are the means to attain heaven by doing good deeds. Those who do not perform worship cannot enter heaven. In short, both the utterances from the Bhagavad Gita contain in them undeniable evidences of the other world and the existence of heaven.

In the Epics

More than in anything else it is in the Epics that the descriptions of heaven which the Vedas and their supplements corroborated have been given more vividly. Heaven is the highest place for the virtuous to dwell. It is the life-long aspiration of the believers to attain and abide there. Even suggestions about what rules need be obeyed in life for achieving this have been given in the Epics.

Those who aspire after heaven must remain without boasting of their endowments from penance, for shedding selfishness must give out largesses according as abilities. Even the destitute must try to remain a winner in life by giving out either a sandal, a cloth, fruit, a tuber, leaves or at least some water as alms to ward off the loss of days. The munificent wont be sent to hell".

That, virtues, especially the alms-giving facilitates the ways to heaven is the essence of what is said above. For this, even the destitute and the poor must give out alms as

connotations in addition to their primary meaning or when they have only one meaning as their primary meaning or otherwise. It is the duty of those who are linguistically concerned to help keep either the reader or the hearer of the language up with such changes as and when they thus occur. But in the case of the real meanings of the words of the Vedas in making them being thus convinced of whether the scholars did succeed still remains a disputed question. For example, in the Rig Veda the word Asura is used as a qualifying attribute of "Paramathma" or the Supreme soul. Asu = life, Asura = one who is brimming with life.

This meaning, "one who is brimming with life" which the ancient believers of the Vedas had given to the word Asura denoting God, wore off in course of time and gradually disappeared from the translations of the Vedas. What came up in its place instead was the legend the Paramathma (Prajapathy) has two sons of the names of Asura and Suras (Devas). This anti-veda, anti-god explanation brought about noticeable in the attitude of the believers of the Vedas towards their conception of the meaning of bounden duty and morality. And in order to ward off the possibility of misconceptions, which might preciptitate, of the new meaning given to the word Asura that had diverted the direction of the message of the Vedas the legendary story of a war between the Asuras and Devas was fabricated and disseminated among the people. It is some what like this that the legendary story about the Asuras and Devas begins in the Chandogyopanisad.

"In days of old in the past there started a battle between the Asuras and Devas. With a view to winning over the Asuras in the battle Devas take stimulant drugs" (Chandogyopanisad 1-2-1)

When it comes for explaining the word Asura from the Vedas today, this war story from the Upanisad is looked on as the expedient with the result that its basic meaning "one who is brimming with life" gradually gets to be turned down as obsolete. This decadence of meaning happened to the word Asura in the Vedas has, in turn, become non-Vedic with regards to its message. This is the origin of the Deva-Asura story now existing among the Hindus. And this mistake in ideals handed over for centuries is being repeated even today by the Upanisads and the Epics.

Various technical terms in the Vedas give out anti-Veda ideals. As a result of this many of the Vedic utterances have undergone misunderstandings and misrepresentations. The scholars are busy seeking myriads of reasons for this mystey. In the opinion of K. M Panicker many of the words used in the Vedas just do not obtain today. So the ideas contained in them cannot by grasped. Any way, one cannot say for certain in whichever nuances of meaning have they been used in a particular context in the Vedas.

It was with the intention of solving this mystery that Yaska had created Niruktha. Yaskas's method of searching out the unknown meanings of words was based on the spelling sounds of the words. Even though the same method was employed by other interpreters as well, the vague terms which Yaska himself discarded as unyielding still remain without being deciphered in any satisfying way based on the vision of the Vedas. Example Dhee, Krathu, Kavi and so on. Fire is worshiped as Kavi, Saraswathy has been extolled as "Dhiyamyam Sadhayanthi". These words are interpreted in different ways in many places. These comprise in them certain

newer ideals which are Vedic in essence. But in grasping the essence of these words neither the Niruktas nor the commentaries help us properly.

The Letter of the Vedic Language

At the time of the beginning of Vedic literature the system of printing or writing was not in practice in India. The Vedic scriptures were preserved committed to memory. We find mention of books and letters as made maiden in the Atarva Veda and Thaitthareeya Samhida. From the detailed explanation given in the Gopadha Brahmana about syllables we can conclude that at least from that period the system of letters might have begun here..... The kinds of letters that obtained in ancient India were kharoschti and Brahmi. Just as the language of the Vedic literature was known as Sanskrit so was it not as Sanskrit that their letter was known. The famous investigator and scholar Sree Krishna Chaithanya writes about the ancient type of letters used in the creation of the Sanskrit language.

"Two types of letters existed in ancient India. "Kharoschti" was one of them. This was an imitated model of Semitic script that obtained in the fifth century B. C. From the fourth century B. C until the time of two thousand B. C this had existed in Gandhara (old Afganistan) and the northern Punjab. This language used to be written from the right side to the left. The second language is "Brahmi" which was born of the Phoenician script and which also belonged to the Semitic family. The Phoenicians were men of great trade in pre-historic times. From the Phoenicians the Assyrians got this script. This might have arrived in India around the time of eighth hundred B.C along with the traders who came through

Mesopotamia to India. And from certain coins of the fourth century B.C it has come to light that this script was also written from right to left in its early days but, before long began to be written from left to right. Brahmi was the script which was adopted and maintained as the letter of the Sanskrit language." (Samskrutha Sahithya Charithram, Page, 63-64 National Book Stall Kottayam, 1968) Rendered in to English by the translator.

A coin of five letters printed in the fourth century bears ample proof that the Brahmi script was written from right to left reiterating our previous assumptions. Besides, an ancient inscription excavated from Yeragud near Karuli in 1924 is also in the shape of the Brahmini script written from right to left. The later investigators have unearthed many Asoka Pillars also with inscriptions in Brahminic script from right to left. The renowned Sanskrit scholar and investigator K. C Pillai has reaffirmed this. "Devanagari and the other Aryan alphabets which came to existence later were all developed from Brahmi. The scholars who studied the ancient coins have it that in the beginning they were also written from right to left. There had to be elapsed a long time before they could begin to be written from left to right" (Samskrutha Sahithya Charithram Page 19, D. C Books, Kottayam, 1996) Rendered in to English by the translator.

The above statements reveal that the Sanskrit language and its literature were written from right to left like the Arabic language in olden days. This language and its literary creations are part of the cultural heritage and the religious tongue of the Hindus who constitute the major portion of the Indian population. The language of Sanskrit which is written from left to right today had a different direction of movement through and opposite

much as they can. The doers of virtues, the good natured, the meek and amiable, the merciful and the pitying, all will be given entry to heaven. Devotees of God, those who respect teachers and parents, those who care for the destitute and the poor will be in heaven as has been proclaimed in the Epics. And it is for the virtuous that the world of prosperity and sublimity is offered. Descriptive mentions of such people and the glories of heaven can be seen through out the Hindu visions.

The dwellers of heaven who were men of virtues move about there as they like enraptured by the intoxication in sensuousness. There are no atheists, thieves ungrateful, or conceited persons among them. Only the souls of the faithful, brave, merciful, patient, naïve and the munificent men are there in heaven as the inmates. Nor are there to occur any of such worldly happenings such as, illness, hoariness, death, sorrow, mist or fog, sunlight, hunger, thirst or fatigue among any of the dwellers.

The authoritative Hindu scriptures such as the Vedas, Upanisads, the Bhagavad Gita and the Epics are not simply turning away after touching on the question of the hereafter. They are engaged in exposing the truth about it and its constituting parts "hell" and "Heaven" as existent on irrefutable rational grounds. Revelations on hell and heaven and the hereafter comprise parts of the contents of these scriptures and hence can be discerned the truth that the vision on the hereafter forms part of the Hindu Dharma.

The allusions to hell and heaven and the hereafter that we find in the Hindu scriptures point to certain conclusions.

One:- That the gleanings of truth lying scattered about in the Hindu scriptures are divine revelations.

Two:- That the visions of the Hindu religion teach us that the belief in hell and heaven works a miracle in turning men of addicted habits to a moral life.

Three:- That the religious revelations taught by the Vedas have undergone corrections and additions.

8 The Conception of the Vedic Philosophy

The meaning of the word Veda is knowledge or that which has been made known. The Vedas constitute the fundamental knowledge pertaining to the moral or ethical sciences. Because of the belief that they were revealed by God to the sages, they bear also the name scriptures Rig, Yajur, Sama and Atarva are the four Vedas in all, and these four have three supplements of the names of Bhramana, Aranyakom and Upanisad to each. They are looked on, either as the commentaries on the Vedas or as their explanations. Moreover, in order to facilitate the study of the Vedas, works like "Shikschah" which helps with the pronunciations in the Vedas, "Kalpam" which contains the rules and regulations for conducting sacrifices, "Vyakarana" intended for language studies, "Niruktham" which explains the technical terms and sounds, Chandas which deals with the reckoning of words while chanting the Manthras, and "Jyothisam" which solves the problems of astrological sciences, are relied on.

"Thasmadyanjath sarvahuthairucha samaninjirea
Tchandang signjjirea thasmadya justhasmada
jayathaa" (Yajur Veda 31-17)

(From the male in whom the attributes of the power
Absolute Conjoin, make him perfected;
From Almighty God, the supreme soul,
Worthy of, worshipped by all!

Know thee; came to light the four Vedas,
Rig, Sama, Atarva and the Yajur)

(Dayanada Saraswathy, Translation, Narendrabhushan, Vedaparyatanam, Vaidika Sahithya Parishat, Chengannur, 1973) Rendered in to English by the translator

The renowned scholar Sadhusheelan K. Parameshwaran Pillai writes on the emergence of the Vedas "The Vedas had their origin in God. The ascetics envisioned them, heard them, hence the names seers also for the ascetics." (Hindu Dharma Parichayam, Page 164, Sree Ramakrishna Matam, Puranattukara, 1989)

Dayananda Saraswathy explains this through his question – answer method.

Question – whichever scriptures have the name Veda?

Answer – Only the anthologies of the holy hymns such as the Rig, Yajur, Sama and the Atarva bear the name Veda.

(Sathyardha Prakasham, Page 332, Kerala Arya Samaj Mission, Kozhikode, 1933)

Language in which the Vedas were Revealed

The Vedas were revealed in archaic Sanskrit. Like any other language this Sanskrit also underwent changes with the passage of time. And amidst these changes the Vedic scholars failed to construe the real aims of the Vedic utterances from which there echoed the basic truth of the Vedas.

There are instances in a language when the same word may have more than one meaning or different

channel in ancient times. But the sudden shift to writing this script from left to right marked the beginning of ineptitudes in the way of thinking and mode of life of the people of India. In spite of their smallness in numbers, the set of alphabets which are written from right to left represent the culture and mode of life of a sublime type. This culture unlike any other of its kind has continued uninterrupted from the beginning of the world without deviating from ideals. It was in the shade of this culture that the Sanskrit language and the archaic Brahmi letters in which it was written were sustained. These facts could be perceived as the highlights that drop a hint to the hidden sources of the Vedic vision. The above studies made on the transformation of letters and alphabets open the way to the truth that it was not in the present day crucible claimed to have been that of the Sanskrit language that the real existence of that language was forged. The renowned Vedic investigator and the late opostle of the Arya Samaj in kerala Vedabandhu makes out this in his unequivocal style.

"We find a similarity which is lacking in other European languages running through the Arabic and Sanskrit languages. Both of them have the singular, dual and plural forms in them. When the structure dialect of the Sanskrit language and other modern Indian languages have dropped the use of the dual number from them how is it that the Arabic language alone could retain it in use. Not only that regarding the rules of grammar in both the Arabic and Sanskrit languages similarities can be noticed. In this situation we are compelled to acknowledge the truth that there exists a certain alliance between the Arabic language which belongs to the Semitic family and the Sanskrit language which belongs to the Indo-European family. That alliance may be a freak of nature or may be

the root of both one and the same". (Rig Veda Praveshika, Page 193-194, Kerala Sahithya Academy, Trishur, 1988) Rendered in to English by the translator.

Not only the Vedas or the Vedic philosophies were but even the alphabet of the Sanskrit Language was subjected to 'forced religious conversions when history was in an ill-fated period of transition. The philosophical visions of ancient India which they had stood for happened to be expelled or ousted in the new onslaught. But to day, if we are to get at the real truth of how that language and literature got themselves transformed in to a much different opposite state of being the bulwarks of an alien mode of culture and civilization perhaps we needs must wait until fossils begin to speak for themselves.

The Branches of the Vedas

An analytical study of the Vedas must comprise in it the study of their branches as its most important part. Today, the number of their branches has dwindled from a total count of 1131 to a mere 5 or 6 in all. Among the Veda commentaries the branches of the Vedas have the honour of being the first in coming in to existence before the Brahmanas came. While the Rig Veda had 21 branches, the Yajur had 101 and the Sama and Atarva 1000 and 9 branches in each. But out of the total those that have survived for each today are shakalam and shanghayanam for the Rig, Krishnam and Shulkam for the Yajur, Kaudhumi and Ranayani for the Sama and Shoukana for the Atarva. Out of these only a few such as the Shanghayanam of the Rig Veda, Ranayani of the Sama Veda and the only one branch Shounaka of the Atarva Veda have but partly got in to print.

The Vedic branches constitute the pedagogical sets of explanatory interpretations propounded on the Vedas by the ancient sages of the Vedic periods. The true meanings or the essence of the Vedic contents can be derived only from these branches. What the ancient sages were engaged in doing was learning and elucidating the underlying principles of the Vedas and teaching them to the world. In order to bring out more pellucidly the meanings of the basic hymns the general meanings of hymns and their differences among themselves were narrated in more lucid ways in these Vedic branches. It was because of these factors had not gained much acceptance in to any other scriptures except the Vedic branches that many of the hymns had to lose the context of their chanting to oblivion and their ideals became indistinct in vagueness and opposite in meanings. And as a telling consequence of all these on the Vedas the Vedic philosophy drained away from the scriptures of the post Vedic periods and many of the Vedic sayings underwent misinterpretations. From the statement that there were 1131 Veda-branches in ancient India it becomes evident how far the study of the Vedas had grown there in India at that time. At the same time it also stands to reason to believe from the fact that those who came later got only seven branches as inheritance including those in the archeological collection that the Veda-branches were not only simply lost but were also made to be lost.

The Deviation of the Vedas

The learning's of the post Vedic scholars were not up to elucidating the basic ideals of the utterances which poised difficulties of meaning among the Vedic sayings. Linguistic transformations, modification of letters and the

disappearance of the Veda – branches were the contributory factors which accelerated the deviation of the Vedic message from its assigned path. But the followers of the Vedic faith could not surmount that critical phase. The rulers, scholars and poets were all freely engaged in capitalizing on this opportunity for misinterpreting the Vedic utterances to their liking and twisting them in to non – existent meanings.

The priesthood which had struck root in India earlier than the Brahmini period led the religion of the Vedas through their priestly ways for material gains. Investigators opine that this was the beginning of the fall of the Hindu religious vision. With a view to preserving their vested interests the priests created many ostensible gestures in the name of the Hindu scriptures and spread them among the believers.

Gleanings of stories from the Brahmanas and the Upanisads were the incentive factors that incited them to such legendary narrations. Unfortunate to say, the Vedic masters and their pupils of the later period fixed their attention on these legends and subsequently with the lapse of time the Vedic vision was dimmed by these fictitious stories. Dr. Sukumar Azheekode writes on such events carried out by the masters of the priesthood. "Overwhelmed by the flood of exciting stories and esoteric legends of the Vedic deities, Indra, Vishnu and the Sun-god, that shining crest-jewel of the Vedic faith which once decked the zenith of its glory in divine excellence now gone and disappeared wheresoever" and thus there arose and got ingrained here the doctrine that with the help of myths and legends the meanings of the Vedas have to be expounded". (Tat Tvam Asi) Rendered in to English by the translator.

To day it is to the Epics that the Hindu masters give the most importance. For the evidence in support of the Epics they turn to the Brahmanas and the Upanisads and for supporting the Brahmanas and the Upanisads they bank on the Vedas. It fact it should have been to the Vedas that the prime importance had to be given, because they are the words of God. All the others such as the Brahmanas, Upanisads or the Epics are commentaries on the Vedas by the sages. Hence no substitute either for the divine message of the Vedas or for the divine decrees present in them. Their authenticity is only relative to their compatibility with the Vedic sayings.

Loss of the Vedas

"As I retrieved the lost Veda, I shall bring back home Sitha from her internment", "says Hanuman in the Ramayan. Bhima recapitulates the conversation that took place in Shantiparva between Narada and Vishnu some what like this". "When the Vedic scriptures were lost I retrieved them and completed them with the Brahmanas and the Hymns. I did the same in the Krtyayuga also".

From the period of the Epics Mahabharatha and Ramayana the Hindu community knew that portions of the Vedas had been lost and from that very period they were made complete with the Brahmanas and the hymns, too. But it is widely known nevertheless that the contents of the Brahmanas can never even emulate the sayings of the Vedas in sublimity, let alone be equal. The statement that the lost portions of the Vedas were retrieved and made complete with the addition of the Brahmanas and the hymns to them guarantees the fact that the portions later added to the retrieved Vedas to substitute for their lost portions were non-existent with the Vedas before they

were lost. The confession that as and when the Vedic sayings happened to be lost there used to be the convention of being the Brahmanas added to them to make them complete corroborates the fact that the divine contents of the Vedas were bastardized. When the Brahminic hymns which were commentaries by the sages were added in the place of the Vedic hymns to atone for the lost portions the fundamental vision of the Vedas was getting vague and gradually draining away.

Dr. Sukumar Azeekode has also emphatically affirmed this fact. "As Sayanan pointed out the Brahmanas came in to being long after-wards the hymns of the Rig Veda had been compiled. At that time they were added as supplements to the Vedas. The Brahmanas got themselves interspersed with the Vedic hymns and made them in a blend of admixtures. Evidences show that there existed a period in the history of the Vedas when a clash of meanings in which one was at a loss to distinguish between the hymn and the Brahmana occurred. The story of the Yajur Veda having attained the two shades of meaning Krishna and Shukla serves an example. Colour is not the connotation implied to the terms Krishna and Shukla. "that which is made clear and pure through strict scrutiny and examination" is the meaning given to Shukla by commentators. On elucidation what it becomes is that the Yajur was freed of contamination from Brahmanas. In the introduction to the Rig Veda what Sayana seems to have occupied himself with the most is as to how to free the hymns from the grip of the Brahmanas. Here the master acknowledges there has been bastardization" (Mathru Bhumi Onam special – 1984 september) Rendered in to English by the translator.

Cause of Loss

The main reason of the Vedas having gone astray or lost was the negligence in keeping them safely. The paucity of dissemination and the indolence in handing them over to generation from generation come under this. Keeping the Vedas in writing was even banned in early days. Pouring molten lead in to the ears of the pariah who ventured to hear the Vedas recited to him was the rule promulgated by the ancient scholars. Because of the like scheme of things around, the important topics of the Vedas kept on undergoing transformations in each generation. And these might have been the result of a low standard of intellectual retentiveness or sheer oblivion of those who learned them from other people's tongues.

The faults and errors which happened to the fundamentals of the Vedic scripture through the centuries have camouflaged the original message of the Vedas. Along with the loss of the Vedic portions, there have also been destructions done to them. N. V Krishnawarrier opines that when the Rig Veda was compiled from the scattered gleanings of an antique vocal tradition many of the hymns might have been discarded.

The loss of the Vedas and their subsequent retrieval caused many an increase in the number of the Vedic hymns. But, because of the fear of a breach of loyalty to doctrines the majority of them were set on fire.

"The ancient monasteries were famous abodes of monks. Only those which were acknowledged by reading there as true were given permission to be taught. The others were burned up along with the sacrificial shed, Dr. Sathya Prakash says" (Narendra Bhushan, Vaidika

Sahithya, Charithram, Page – 90) Rendered in to English by the translator.

The Vedas that we possess today are those which were thus perfected by the monasteries. The possibilities of those which were burned up there having contained the lessons of vital importance on the teachings of the Vedas are high.

Commentaries on the Vedas

Though there are many who could be counted as the commentators on the Vedas two names loom large among them. they are the names of Yaska and Sayana. Of their commentaries Niruktha by Yaska who lived before Christ is said to be the best by any standard. Niruktha was composed by Yaska at a period when the meanings of the Vedas were difficult to grasp even for the scholars due to difference of language and the unintelligible nature of their grammer. To a certain extent Yaskacarya's Niruktha could succeed in solving the unintelligibility. Even so, there is no unanimity in opinion that Niruktha is completely free from errors.

Another very famous scholar among the commentators on the Vedas was Sayanacharya. He was minister in the Vijaya Nakara empire. Sayana's commentary was more popular than Yaskar's but the scholars like Dayananda Saraswathy and Sukumar Azeekode have it that the majority of his commentaries fall short of construing the intrinsic meanings inherent in the Vedas.

The renowned Sanskrit scholar cum investigator Dr. N.V.P Unithiri writes! "After retiring as minister (from the Vijaya Nagara empire) he (sayanacharya) became the

head of one of Sankaracaryas monasteries. On ruminating over the lurking thought that Sayana was a political leader on the governing body of the only one Hindu empire of his time we are struck by a casual hint as to what might have been the indwelling aim of the implications of meanings in his commentaries. He composed all his commentaries on the Vedas as the combinations of religious rites and ways of sacrifices in such a way as to foster an attitude of awesome sympathy among the people towards such rites and rituals which might as a rule help the high caste Hindu ruling class whom he represented preserve their vested interests. The commentator will be impelled to twist the meanings of the Atarva Veda also in many places as was happened in the case of the Rigveda. And it was just that what had happened as well (Samskrtha Sahithya Charitham, Vol. 1, Page 155-156, Kerala Sahithya Academy, Trissur 1990) rendered in to English by the translator.

Narashamsa

Narashamsa is an important name found in the Vedas. The results of studies and analysis by scholars about this word lack uniformity. It could be seem that they had created more vagueness in the formation of its meaning and in their comments on it than in any other names. The renowned Vedic scholar V.K Narayana Bhattathiri writes.

"Narai: Prashasya: Bhavathy Ithy Narashamsa. The one who is glorified by the humans is Narashamsa. The shape of the Supreme soul that sustains the universe in the never ending perpetuality cannot be said as such and such. But the one thing, which is certain, is that in whichever form that pqwer Absolute is glorified by man, that will manifest itself in all those forms. The word man is not

confined to its connotation human alone in the Vedas. Sayanan has used the word human or its synonym man aptly 'connoting the wind or the Vedas'. (Vedasannesham, Page: 109-110, Kerala Sahithya Academy, Trissure, 1993) Rendered in to English by the translator.

V.K Narayana Bhattathiri's explanation elucidates two points:

One: That the word Narashamsa has the meaning "the man who is glorified by the humans".

Two: The meanings which Sayanacarya had given to the word Narashamsa were the wind or the Vedas.

The word Narashamsa has been given an honourable place in the ancient scriptures. The Vedic scholars of India have openly acknowledged the fact that the word Narashamsa that we find in the Vedas and the word Naryasanha that we find in the Zend-aveta (Jend) are one and the same.

The renowned Vedic scholar justice Ganga Prasad writes quoting the Vedic investigator Gaug! "The names Narashamsa in Yaska's Niruktha (8-6) and Naryosanha as the name of one of God's servants in jend are similar. Like Naryosanha is messanger of Ahuramasda in Zend aveta (Vendi Dadxii), so are fire-god and Poshana in Vedic utterances. One who is glorified by man is the meaning assigned to this word. That is, one who is renowned".

From the fore-going quotations it becomes evident that some sections of the Vedic scholars in India acknowledge the fact that Narashamsa and Naryasanha are one and the same person and that he is the messenger of God. The name Narashamsa means one who is glorified

by man. To camouflage this truth the names 'goddesses' and the 'Vedas' were the new interpretations given to Narashamsa by Sayanacarya. Until then it was known to mean one who will be glorified by man. When it was made in to a belief that those who were glorified by man were either the goddesses or the Vedas matters began to come well and easy for those who were like Sayanacarya. If it was revealed that Narashamsa who was to be glorified thus by man was the messenger of God that would create intricacies of facers for the Vedic scholars.

Who is that messenger of God? Mentioned as Narashamsa-the one who is glorified by man. What are his distinctive attributes? Why do the Vedic scholars find it difficult to speak about God's messenger who is glorified by man?

Has there not been allusion to such a messenger of God in the history of the Hindu religion? Anyway, before seeking after the ways for solving such misgivings let us consider the allusions which have appeared in the Vedas to Narashamsa.

"Narasahamsassuscudatheemam yangjamadabhya!
Kavihi madhuhasathya!" (Rig Veda 5-5-2)

(Glorified by man, Narashamsa, named after fire,
Well tends the run of this sacrifice. (carries through)
Are not thee the one slain not by the foes?
Or the incumbent wine in hand?)

"Shuchi pavako adbhutho
madwayangjammimikschathi Narashamsa stiradivo
devoh devesctayangjiya" (Rig Veda 1-42-3)

(A biding amidst the deities in pomp and glory,

Purifying the impure, refining the filthy,
Yet all the more growing bright and novel!
Narashamsa, named after fire, the purifier,
Born of miracles in the heavens [the one who is
Glorified by sacrificing devotees human] licks up
Three times the holy sacrifice, relishes, [with the
Devouring tongues of flame] the nectar – like
Intoxicant!] [god, Narashamsa honoured by the holy
sacrifice].

The two utterances cited above from the Rig Veda speak about Narashamsa. Let us re-write his attribute as are given in them.

One: Narashamsa is the one glorified by man. He is worthy of the respect and felicitation of the people of all ages.

Two: He has been the leader of all time slain by no foes, in spite of repeated attempts on life. He is such a great man who escaped assassination.

Three: He purifies the impure, refines those who are given to immoral ways and leads them to the path of righteousness. Such is Narashamsa.

Four: He always keeps up his novelty. He was ordained to continue as the messenger till the end of the world. That is Narashamsa.

The attributes of Narashamsa who is glorified by man and spoken of in the Rig Veda are the descriptions given above. But these qualities mentioned in the Vedas are lacking in Sayanacarya's Narashamsa. Hence what had been meant by Narashamsa in the Veda were not the goddesses or the Vedas.

On being revealed the original aim of the introduction of Narashamsa in the Veda new scenarios of scholastic interest will begin to open up in the hidden realms of the Vedic studies. That will serve the purpose of diverting the course of the Hindu religion and propelling the spiritual legacy of ancient India towards its assigned path. Sayanacarya had the fore-sight about this. That was why he had given new interpretations to Narashamsa with the implicit intention of aborting any move to such divergence. And it was because the scholars of every period had succeeded in camouflaging the divine message of the Vedas by misinterpreting their technical terms and creating newer doctrines like incarnation, idolatry, re-birth, monism and so on in such a way as to suit the people of each and every age why the ancient Vedic religion had to be changed in to the present day Hindu religion.

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9 Origin of the Hindu Religion

The Vedas are the fundamental scriptures of the Hindu religion. The Brahmanas, Aranyas, Upanisads, the Legends and the Epics are all distinct commentaries made separately on the Vedas at different periods by various scholars. But in any case they cannot claim to be the equals of the Vedas since the Vedas are revelations from God.

The philosophical reflections of the ancient sages in India constitute the Upanisads. Their thoughts and speculations are embodied in them. The renowned scholar and the late president of our nation Dr. S. Radhakrishnan writes! "Unfortunately, we know very little of the lives of the great thinkers whose reflections are embodied in the Upanisads. So careless were they of personal fame and so anxious for the spread of truth, that they fathered their views on the honoured deities and heroes of the Vedic period". (Indian Philosophy Vol. 1, Page 143)

The fore-most among the contemporary Vedantists in Kerala Swamy Mootanantha evaluates! "The philosophical reflections embodied in the Upanisads are the highest of what man could have aspired after in the realm of his spiritual reaches. Hence the name Vedanta, or the final part of the Veda, for the Upanisads. Like the 'last part of the Vedas' they have also got the meaning the end of the meanings of the Vedas. The philosophy of the Upanisads remains at the exalted heights of the ultimate

human reaches in knowledge and wisdom. (Samskrutha Sahithya Charithram, Vol-1, Page 202, Kerala Sahithya Academy, Trisur 1990- rendered in to English by the Translator)

The Upanisads are either commentaries on the Vedas or the complements to them made as supplements by man. Even to day their authors, the thinkers who created them, remain anonymous. The statement of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan that they fathered their views on the honored deities" and that of Swamy Mootanantha that 'the highest of what man could have aspired after in the realm of his spiritual reaches' well corroborate the assertion that the vision contained in the Upanisads is the product of human thought. Perhaps the only sources that affirm the divine nature of the Hindu religion are the Vedas. But unfortunate to say, Vedas which were once in the fore-front among the group of scriptures in the Hindu literature have now been expelled from their places. Instead what have been installed as substitutes for the Vedas are the Upanisads which expressed doubts about the reliability of the divine revelation embodied in the Vedas and manifested new doctrines alleging imperfection in the Vedic vision.

It was not in a particular period of fixed time that the Upanisads were installed in the place of the Vedas, but over a period of many centuries through conspiratorial planning's. Let Dr. Redhakrishnan himself speak about the repugnant attitude that the Upanisads had held towards the Vedas. "The attitude of the Upanisads is not favourable to the sacredness of the Vedas Like the rationalistic thinkers of a later day; they adopt a double attitude towards Vedic authority". (Indian philosophy; Vol-1page-149)

Among the scholars who gave more importance to the Upanisads than to the Vedas Sankaracarya ranks first. Sankara's statement, "despite a hundred sayings from the scriptures (Vedas), the burning flame never subsides cooled", is to be counted as part of a pre-planned conspiracy to do away with the Vedas from the field of Hindu philosophy. The historical truth that it was with the advent of the monistic doctrine that the Vedas began to go downhill lends more credibility to the whole episode.

The new anti-Veda doctrines propounded by the Upanisad did not confine themselves to the bounds of philosophical sphere alone. They mingled with the beliefs and customs of the Indians and affected the whole lot of their social fabric. Their conception of theism, eschatology and other religious rituals of the time were confined to an opposite corner. It was about this time that the Hindu religion was at the crossroads in the history of its life time as a result of the supremacy which the Upanisads had got over it in the place of the Vedas. They misrepresented the Vedic culture and civilization and laid down the foundation of an attractive worldly culture which fascinated the community. And what followed as an aftermath of all these was the disappearance of the Vedic vision.

After that a great decadence befell of the spiritual aspect of the lives of the people of India. The monotheistic belief on which the people were steadfast until then now began to be deviated in to four distinct wings such as polytheism, idolatry, the doctrine of incarnation and the theory of non duality or monism. The concept of life-after-death acquired the status of being treated as the results of one's worldly life based on deeds whether good or bad. Belief in the here-after and the concept of hell and

heaven in which the people believed until then began to be depicted as the creations of mere fantasy. The Hindu religion and the vision about it had grown so complex and varied in aspects that the later followers of the Vedas appeared in such a frame of mind with regards to belief as to be even suspected of being unbelievers in God. The renowned scholar V.K Naryana Bhattathiry writes! 'The foremost among the reasons for the fall and decline of the Indians is their rejection of the Vedas. This rejection had begun earlier than the emergence of Budhism here. Unfortunately, this rejection was sustained and nurtured by the Vedantists themselves. "(Vedartdha Vicaram, Page 31, Mathrubhumi Publishing Company, Kozhikode 1984, Rendered in to English from Malayalam by the translator")

The authors of the Upanisads paved the way for getting the Vedas evicted from the minds of the people. In order to free themselves from the framework of the divine vision the Upanisad thinkers changed their old frames of reference and presented them in a new garb with reformative alterations made. These delusive designs which were carried out under the aegis of the priests pressed on the people the wrong notion that other scriptures than the Vedas were the ultimate testimonies underlying the Hindu religious vision, as a result of which a large section of the believers gave the prime importance to the Upanisads. The foremost among the modern Hindu religious scholars Swamy Ranganathanandan writes! "The Upanisads are the only sacred books which addressed themselves exclusively to the discovery of these essential spiritual truths and to leading man, irrespective of creed and race, to their realization in his own life. Indian tradition refers to the Upanisad, therefore, as Sruti". (The

message of the Upanisads, Swamy Ranganathananda, Page 8)

This is an example of how the Vedas had disappeared from the mind of the scholars and the believers. During the period when the Vedas were at their prime the Hindu religion was known to the scholars and the historians by various names such as the Vedic religion, the religion of the Vedas, the ancient religion of the Aryans and so on. The Hindu religion as we know it today was evolved after that.

The transformation of the Vedic religion from its divine state in to the Hindu religion involved in it not only the mere transference of its ideals from the vision of the Vedas, but was also the cause of merging the indigenous customs and other festivities of the non – Aryan Indians with the Hindu religion. The followers of the Hindu religion adopted their tribal folk-lore, native customs, the offering of sacrifice and festivals. Trees, animals, serpents, imaginary demons, satans and all became the divine embodiments worthy of worship for the Hindus. The practice of immolating goats and cocks to propitiate the deities, the oracle, black magic and so forth became their inspiration for celebrations in the Hindu religion. With this there had formed great divergence of ideas between the Vedic religion and the newly formed Hindu religion. Though they were both standing as separate religions in the beginning, with the passage of time they were amalgamated in to one as the Hindu religion.

Dr. Radhakrishnan writes on the modification of the Vedic religion in to the Hindu religion! "We see in the Epics the gradual modification of the old Vedic religion in to modern Hinduism. The Skata, the Pasupata or the Saiva and the Bancaratra systems, which belong to the agama

class, and are therefore non-Vedic, enter in to the Hindu religion. We have also image worship in temples, pilgrimages to sacred places gradually introduced" (Indian philosophy, Page 486). Almost all the religious customs and celebrations that form part of the modern Hinduism were adopted once. It was with the intention of making these non-Vedic customs the constituent parts of the Hindu religion that the stories and precepts which corresponded with them were created by the priests in later periods. Thus we see that the present day customs of the Hindu religion ranging from the doctrine of non-duality to that of Sati are mere periodic additions to it.

The ancient followers of Hinduism were monotheists. They did not have the temples as we have them today for worship. They built only the sacrificial sheds. It was with the intention of attracting the Budha-Jaina sects in to the Hindu fold that their religious customs were adopted and instituted in the Hindu religion. Acarya Narendra Bhushan openly acknowledges this fact. "The Hindu religion has tried its best to assimilate Sree Budha in to it. The Budha is included in the fold of the Hindu incarnations. Poet Jayadeva's glorification of Sree Krishna in his Geeda Govinda as the embodiment of Budha in flesh serves us part of the dogma. It was not the obolition of Budhism what happened in India. It was the assimilation of it in to Hinduism. And this assimilation of Budhism by the Hindu religion was to be nearly complete over a span of about thirty or forty decades after the eleventh century. (Rendered in to English by the translator)

Behind the story of the assimilation of the Budha – Jaina religions in to Hinduism there is the history of a bloody violence, arson and plunder. It was done as a compensation for their having driven away Budhism from

the soil of India that Sree Budha was given the title of being one among the twenty four incarnations of the Hindus. The derogatory invectives and other obscene songs sung at Kodungalloor and Cherthalai in temple festivals were the slogans which the Hindu priests had echoed against the Budha-Jaina religions in days of old. By sprinkling the powder of turmeric and performing animal sacrifice and through other horrifying bizarre rituals they brought down the impact of the influence of Budhism. They converted the Budhist monasteries in to Hindu temples by coercion. The Vatakkumnada temple of Trisur and the Bhagavathy temple of Kodungalloor come under those which were thus converted. 'There were numberless Budhist monasteries along the coastal areas of Kerala. The Brahmin priests organized a band of well trained ready marauders for destroying them. Their attack dragged on terribly for about half a century as one-sided and fierce. Their captain was one Villwamangalam Swamy. Their triumphant journey, begun as punitive, started from Kodungalloor and continued setting fire to all the monasteries on their way to reduce them to ashes. Whatever tricks of warfare on earth did they wield in their fight? Revelling in wielding power and indulging in arson and looting how they converted the Budhist monasteries in to Hindu temples boisterously committing genocide in drunken spree and war cry has been given in the Travancore state manuel as described by V. Nagayya". (N.R Krishnan, Ezhavar Annum Innum, Page 41-42, 'The quoted excerpt was rendered in to English by the translator")

Not only in Kerala, but in the whole of India were the Budha – Jaina religions subjected to severe harassment and persecution. As a result of that they sought asylum in countries like China, Thailand, Burma, Sree Lanka and

Japan at last. The history of the mass massacre which was executed under the auspices of the Brahmin priest Sambandha Murthy alone is much enough to convince us of how the remaining band of Budha's followers in India got in to Hinduism assimilated. At the instigation of Sambandha Murthy about eight thousand innocent Budhists were brutally murdered by piercing their hearts with tridents on the bank of the river Vainga at Madura. The Brahmins of Madura even today celebrate a festival of the name of Kazhuvettithiruvizha to commemorate the memory of this manslaughter.

Nor were the cruelties unleashed on the followers of Jainism so trivial as to be discarded. During the reign of Gunapandian in Tamil Nadu the Jains were defeated by Sambandha in a scholastic debate with him who was the apostle of the Shaiva – Brahmin supremacy at the time. But in the aftermath of the defeat the Jainas turned in to an uncompromising attitude refusing either to renounce their religion or to adopt the Hindu religion as a new faith. This stand of the Jains irritated Gunapandiyan and as retaliation for this he sent thousands of Jains to the gallows. Among the wall paintings at the Madura Meenakshi temple there are still many paintings that arouse the sad memories of those human sacrifices done in the long past.

Following the fall of the Budha – Jaina religions a host of new customs came in the Hindu religion and many of the old ones went out as obsolete there-from. Efforts to unify the contradictory beliefs and customs and to make them lively for the benefit of the priesthood were what had extinguished the vision of the Vedas.

The priesthood had later tried to convert these kind of deviations and shortcomings in to Vedic revelations. And such tryings are perhaps even now going on uninterrupted.

"To claim the documental support of the Vedas for their concocted doctrines and depict them as propounded by God": Dr. Radhakrishnan writes on this acclaimed infallibility of the Hindu scholars. "Critics and commentators of different schools claim for their views the sanction of the Veda and exercise their ingenuity in forcing that sanction when it is not spontaneously yielded. In the light of the controversies of subsequent times, they read in to the language of the Vedas opinions on question of which they knew little or nothing." (Indian philosophy, Vol. II, Pate 21, British Edition)

There is no difference of opinion in the fact that the critics of the Vedas were the winners in the debate which lasted for centuries in Hinduism. With the passage of time the non-Vedic doctrines came to be discerned as the Vedic revelations by unanimous consent. Polytheism, Idolatry, the doctrine of incarnation non – duality, the concept of re-birth etc were distinct visions which came upon the stage as critics of the Vedas but were later canonized as the Vedic revelations. Swamy Ranganadhananda writes "It is noteworthy that the Upanisads and the Gita criticise and assess the theological side of the Vedas related to the religious rites present in them. The band of goddesses, the excessive importance given to rituals, the chanting of such hymns as "Amum Yaja: Amum Yaja" found in the Samhithas and the Brahmanas and the pleasant sights of heavens presented in them have all been subjected to criticism". (Rig Vedam Bhasha Bhashyam, Ettam Voliyanthinte Avatharika, Page 791, DC Books, Kottayam, 1995, Portion rendered in to English by the translator of the book)

This statement categorically implies the acknowledgement of the fact that both the Upanisads and

the Gita have passed criticisms on the theological side of the Vedas and on the existence of heaven which forms part of the Vedic belief in the hereafter. The non-Vedic doctrine such as polytheism, idolatry, the doctrine of incarnation and the idea of non-duality came to prominence after they had abolished the Vedic concept of God. And now it is evident that it was with the intention of installing their non-Vedic doctrine of re-birth that they denigrated the age – old belief in the existence of heaven as well.

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